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WRITINGS

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OF

THE REVEREND AND LEARNED

JOHN WICKLIFF, D. D.

Professor of Divinity in Oxford, and Rector of Lutterworth, in the Fourteenth Century.

THE FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATOR OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Vol. I.

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SOME ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE

OF

JOHN WICKLIFF, D.D.

The state of England during the latter part of the fourteenth century presents many causes for painful reflection. Luxury and pride characterised the higher classes, while the lower orders were involved in misery, and vice abounded among all ranks. Contemporary historians ascribe much of this dissoluteness of morals to the civil wars of preceding reigns, whereby the land was desolated, and the bonds of society relaxed. The internal peace of the country, it is true, had become more settled, but many causes united to prevent moral improvement. A long course of foreign victory inflated the national pride; the wealth accruing to individuals from successful warfare, with the habits acquired thereby, promoted luxury and dissipation among the higher ranks, farther stimulated by the introduction of new articles of expense through an increasing commerce.* Meanwhile the people in general were exhausted by calls for pecuniary supplies and personal aid to carry on foreign hostilities; and the feuds and oppressions of powerful barons, with the constant plundering of bands of robbers which for many years had existed almost with impunity, caused much misery among the lower orders, whose sufferings led to the insurrections in the early part of the reign of Richard II. Such in reality was the state of England in the days of Wickliff, as depictured by the annalists who lived near his time, although general

* The ransom of the prisoners taken in one campaign, A. D. 1340, by sir Walter Manny, was equal to 100,000*l.* of our present money.

Walsingham states that, "A. D. 1348, such quantities of furred garments, fine linen, jewels, gold and silver plate, rich furniture and utensils, the spoils of Caen, Calais, and other foreign cities, were brought into England, that every woman of rank obtained some of them, and they were seen in every mansion. Then the ladies of England became proud and vain in their attire, and were as much elated by the acquisition of that finery, as the ladies of France were dejected by the loss of it."

The value of the articles regularly imported into England A. D. 1354, was less than 40,000*l.* not an eighth part of the amount exported, which shows how little the mass of the community were able to indulge in the luxuries or conveniences of life. The imports were of that description, while the exports were chiefly articles of produce. By this difference between the imports and exports, the vast sums drained from England by the court of Rome and foreign ecclesiastics were supplied.

historians, engrossed by military details and political events, dwell but slightly upon these painful circumstances.*

Another cause tended much to produce and to perpetuate an unhappy state of society. For the soul to be without knowledge is not good, and those were days of ignorance and mental darkness. Some symptoms of a revival of learning appeared, but as yet little progress had been made in science. The subtilties of the schools retarded all advances in useful knowledge, while the improvements in fine arts were made subservient to luxury, rather than beneficial to the general character of the age. But ignorance as to spiritual truth was the greatest and most serious evil. The main object of those who called themselves ministers of Christ, was to enslave the minds and to plunder the property of the people committed to their charge; keeping from them the truths of the gospel, and seeking to be reverenced as beings superior to their fellow-men, while they indulged every debasing appetite. The corrupt and depraved state of the popedom at that period is admitted by every historian; it is described as literally "a hell upon earth." To the papal power every ecclesiastic in Europe was compelled to look for authority and direction to exercise the duties of his charge, and we may easily imagine

* One proof of the licentiousness of those days will suffice. In 1380, an expedition was fitted out to aid in the wars of Bretagne. The English troops lay for some time near Portsmouth, wind-bound and waiting for provisions. They ill treated the country round, forcibly carrying off men's wives and daughters. Among other outrages, sir John Arundell, the commander, went to a nunnery, and desired that his troops might be allowed to visit there! This being refused, they entered by violence, and on their departure compelled the nuns to go with them. A storm came on, when these unhappy females were thrown into the sea by the very persons who had forced them to embark! The greater part of the fleet was lost on the coast of Ireland; the leader with a thousand of his men perished. See Walsingham. In Hollinshed will be found several other instances of the military licentiousness then prevalent. Froissart relates that the French troops, prepared for the invasion of England, were equally profligate in their conduct, and pillaged their own countrymen without mercy. Each "gentleman" was followed by a servant called "un pillard," a plunderer.

The state of the lower orders in England may be supposed from a record in the annals of Dunstable abbey, A. D. 1283, where the sale of William Pike, "our slave by birth, and all his family," is mentioned as a matter of course. The price was a mark, or thirteen shillings and fourpence! The prices of food varied much, owing to frequent famines. In one year, 1317, according to Stow, the price of wheat varied from 80*s.* to 6*s.* 8*d.* the quarter. In 1359, wheat was 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*; in 1661, at 2*s.*; and in 1663, at 15*s.* See Fleetwood's Chron. Preciosum. The lower classes must have suffered very much from those sudden variations, and at the high prices they would be quite unable to purchase the necessaries of life. When the difference of the value of money and of commodities is taken into calculation, a shilling in Wickliff's time was equal to a pound at the present day.

what was the general character of those to whom the popes and their counsellors delegated the exercise of that paramount authority they had assumed. Ignorance as to scriptural truth was of course considered by such priests as the best safeguard of their authority; but though the church of Rome has maintained that ignorance is the mother of devotion, we know that such a source will yield only blind superstitious feelings strongly opposed to true religion. The instruction given to the lower classes at that period, tended to harden them in ignorance and vice, while they committed their spiritual concerns entirely to the priesthood; or if the conscience refused to be silenced in this manner, it was diverted to the practice of austerities and will-worship, equally destructive to the soul. The few virtues of that age were not christian virtues, they were founded on the romantic notions of chivalry; faint glimmerings of light which only served to make the surrounding darkness more visible; at best they were deceptive, leading the pilgrim from the way to real peace.* Only a small number of persons had been preserved from the corruptions of the papacy, but they, even in the darkest times, had exercised some influence upon Europe, though subjected to the most bitter persecution. A few individuals also, who were distinguished for mental powers, as Grosseteste and Bradwardine, had borne testimony in England against the usurpations and crimes of the papacy, while others had begun to perceive that the conduct of the priesthood, when examined by the rule of scripture, was altogether antichristian.

The circumstances already noticed should be kept in mind when we enter upon the history of Wickliff. The demoralized state of the land made it ripe for sufferings. In Israel of old, when luxury and wickedness abounded, prophets were sent to warn the people of approaching judgments, and to point out the way of salvation; so in England, Wickliff and others were raised up to bear faithful testimony to the truth, and to denounce what must be the end of the practices which then prevailed.†

* Froissart's Chronicles show this. The mixture of generosity and courtesy with licentiousness and cruelty, depictured by the chivalrous historian, will strike the reader very forcibly.

† The monkish annalists, who were the English historians of those times, fully justify the sketch here given of the state of England during the fourteenth century. The English reader who may not have access to those sources of information, will find many particulars in the histories of Henry, Andrews, and Turner.

The height to which the luxury and excess of the times had arrived in the days of Richard II., is thus described by Hollinshed. "There resorted daily to his court above ten thousand persons, who had meat and drink there allowed them. In his kitchen were three hundred servitors, and every other office was furnished after the like rate. Of ladies chamberers and landerers, there were above three hundred at the least. And in gorgeous and costly apparel they exceeded all

When we recollect the state of England, and the crying evils which called for exposure and reproof, we shall be satisfied that Wickliff was not an ambitious, or a revolutionary spirit, as some have described him, but rather a prophet, as Jeremiah, "weeping day and night for the slain of the daughter of his people,"

measure, not one of them kept within the bounds of his degree. Yeomen and grooms were clothed in silks, with cloth of grain and scarlet, over sumptuous ye may be sure for their estates. And this vanity was not only used in the court in those days, but also other people abroad in the towns and countries, had their garments cut far otherwise than had been accustomed before his days, with embroideries. rich furs, and goldsmiths' work, and every day there was devisings of new fashions, to the great hinderance and decay of the commonwealth. Moreover, such were preferred to bishopries and other ecclesiastical livings, as neither could teach nor preach, nor knew any thing of the scripture of God, but only to call for their tithes and dues; so that they were most unworthy the name of bishops, being lewd and most vain persons disguised in bishop's apparel. Furthermore, there reigned abundantly the filthy sin of lechery and fornication, with abominable adultery, especially in the king, but most chiefly in the prelacy, whereby the whole realm, by such their evil example, was so infected, that the wrath of God was daily provoked to vengeance for the sins of the prince and his people." The "Forme of Cury," proves the excess of luxury of the table in which the court then indulged.

The depraved state of the popedom is described by almost every writer, civil as well as ecclesiastical. One extract may be given from the epistles of Petrarch, who cannot be objected to as an authority on this subject. At that time there was a schism in the papacy, which it might be supposed would oblige the pretenders to the popedom to more than usual care, that they might not disgust their adherents. But the state of the papal court at Avignon, about A. D. 1350, is thus described by Petrarch, and Rome was, if possible, more depraved. He says, the former city had become "a terrestrial hell, a residence of fiends and devils, a receptacle of all that is most wicked and abominable. There is no piety, no reverence or fear of God, no faith or charity, nothing that is holy, just, equitable, or humane." He adds, "Why should I speak of truth, where not only the houses, palaces, courts, churches, and the thrones of popes and cardinals, but the very earth and air, appear to teem with lies! A future state, heaven, hell, and judgment, are openly turned into ridicule as childish fables. Good men have of late been treated with so much contempt and scorn, that there is not one left among them to be an object of derision."

This delineation Petrarch confirms by several facts. In another place he says, "Whatever perfidy and treachery, whatever barbarity and pride, whatever immodesty and unbridled lust you have ever heard or read of; in a word whatever impiety and immorality either now is, or ever was scattered over all the world, you may find here, amassed in one heap." The language of Baronius, the Romish annalist, is scarcely less strong. The depraved state of ecclesiastics in England, particularly the emissaries of Rome and the monastic orders, is delineated by Chaucer in his Canterbury tales in appalling colours. It is also described by the author of the Vision of Piers Plowman, and

hearing the voice of the Lord, "Shall I not visit for these things? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" One deeply impressed by such feelings could not be indifferent to the office appointed him to discharge, nor should he be judged by estimates of what appear to be the duties of a minister of the gospel in our own times. We may consider England at that period, as in many respects resembling Judah in the days of the son of Hilkiah. Like him, Wickliff was called from the priesthood of the land, to bear testimony as a prophet before kings and rulers, and like him, was unavoidably implicated in the political events of the times. And though visitations were not sent upon England to the same extent as those inflicted upon Judah, yet the painful scenes exhibited in the civil wars of the succeeding century, show that famine and the sword came upon the land, and that the people were punished for the fruit of their doings. We should ever remember that national crimes will bring down national judgments. Warnings are sent previously to desolations, but when the voice of the Lord, speaking by his faithful ministers, is disregarded, execution will assuredly follow. It was so in the period referred to. The wickedness and profligacy of England in the fourteenth century were extreme, the awful and certain consequences were plainly exhibited by Wickliff and his associates; many, there is good reason to believe, sought the things which concerned their peace, but the nation at large persisted in evil courses, and persecuted to death the witnesses of the truth. The calamities which followed have been but feebly depictured in the pages of history; the particulars of individual suffering are forgotten amidst details of martial enterprise. May England not forget the innumerable mercies she has since then received, may the warnings of faithful ministers of Christ not again be despised, and may our national sins never again arise to such a height as to bring national judgments upon our country!

John Wickliff* was born about the year 1324, at a village of the same name, a few miles from the town of Richmond in

others, but the various decrees issued by the higher ecclesiastical authorities respecting the life and manners of the clergy, are sufficient and indisputable evidence. Many of these may be found in the third volume of Wilkins's Concilia. They seem wholly to have failed in effecting any moral improvement, which is not surprising when we consider the sources from which they emanated. The gross doctrinal errors inculcated by the church of Rome, even after the days of Wickliff, are explicitly asserted in the proceedings against his followers.

* The name of the reformer has been spelled in sixteen different ways. Wiclif is adopted by Lewis and Baber, and is used in the oldest document in which the name appears—his appointment to the embassy to the pope in 1374. Wycliffe is adopted by Vaughan, and appears to be the most correct. Wickliff is used in the present work as the most popular form. In those times orthography was but little attended to; in proper names especially it was much neglected.

Yorkshire, where his ancestors had resided from the time of the Conquest. The family were respectable, and possessed considerable property, but continued the advocates of those superstitions which their relative earnestly laboured to remove. It is probable, that in consequence of the change in his views he was estranged from his own family. Under feelings of this nature he would be led to use the language of one of his tracts, in which speaking of the errors into which worldly minded parents often fall, he says, "With much travail and cost they get great riches, and estates, and benefices for their children, and often to their greater damnation; but they incline not to get for their children the goods of grace and virtuous life. Nor will they suffer them to retain these goods, as they are freely proffered to them of God; but hinder it as much as they may; saying, if a child yield himself to meekness and poverty, and flee covetousness and pride, from a dread of sin, and to please God,—that he shall never become a man, never cost them a penny, and they curse him because he liveth well, and will teach other men the will of God to save their souls! For by so doing, the child getteth many enemies to his elders, and they say that he slandereth all their noble kindred who were ever held to be true men and worshipful."* In those days, next to the danger and reproach of being a heretic, and closely approaching thereto, was the being accounted a friend or relative of one suspected of heresy.

All the memorial which remains of the history of Wickliff's youth, is, that his parents designed their son for the church, and his mind was early directed to the requisite studies. He was entered at Queen's college, Oxford, an institution then recently founded, from whence he soon removed to Merton college, the most distinguished in the university at that period, when the number of scholars had recently been estimated to amount to thirty thousand. Wickliff's attention appears rather to have been directed to the studies suitable for his profession, than to general literature. As Fuller observes, "The fruitful soil of his

* MS. On wedded men, their wives and children. See "The Life and Opinions of John de Wycliffe, illustrated principally from his unpublished manuscripts, by Robert Vaughan." Vol. I. p. 223. A work which supplies a more complete personal history of the reformer and his writings than any which preceded it. By the author's permission considerable use of his valuable selections has been made in compiling the present brief sketch. The life of Wiclif by Lewis is well known, and deservedly esteemed for the patient industry of the writer, and the valuable materials he has collected. It is, however, to be regretted that he did not give a more full account of Wickliff's doctrinal pieces. Mr. Vaughan has done much to supply this deficiency. Considerable assistance has also been derived from Baber's valuable sketch of Wickliff's life prefixed to his edition of the reformer's new testament. Knyghton, Fox, Hollinshed, and other early chroniclers also have been referred to.

natural abilities he industriously improved by acquired learning. He was not only skilled in the fashionable arts of that age, and in that abstruse, crabbed divinity, all whose fruit is thorns, but he was also well versed in the scriptures; a rare accomplishment in those days." Dr. James enumerates various writers, by whom he considers Wickliff to have been grounded in the truth. He doubtless learned much from the fathers, and was considerably indebted to Grosseteste and Bradwardine; but his writings show that his religious principles were mainly drawn from the bible.*

His perusal of the scriptures and the fathers rendered him dissatisfied with the scholastic divinity of that age, while the knowledge of canon and civil law then requisite for a divine, enabled him to discern many of the errors of popery. His writings also show him to have been well acquainted with the laws of his own country. The four fathers of the Latin church, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory, are continually quoted by him, so as to show his intimate acquaintance with their writings. Augustine, in particular, he seems to have valued next to the scriptures. It will not be forgotten that Luther derived much instruction from the writings of that father. The acknowledged ability of Wickliff as a scholar, led his adversaries to accuse him of evil designs rather than of ignorance, while his friends gave him the title of the evangelic doctor. Even Knighton states that he was second to none in philosophy.

Wickliff's mind must have received deep impressions from an awful visitation of Providence which occurred in the middle of the fourteenth century. Europe was shaken by a succession of earthquakes; shortly after, it was ravaged by a pestilence, the effects of which were more rapid and extensive, than at this day we can easily conceive. More than half the people of this and other lands were swept away; the alarmed survivors reckoned the mortality far higher.† That Wickliff was deeply impressed by this awful event, appears by his frequent references thereto, when he is sounding an alarm to a careless and profane generation. Under a strong feeling that the end of the world approached, he wrote his first publication, a small treatise, entitled "The last Age of the Church," in which he describes the corruptions which then pervaded the whole ecclesiastical state, as the main cause of that chastisement which Europe had so lately felt. Early and deep impressions of

* See, The History of the Church of Christ, Vol. III., for some account of Grosseteste and Bradwardine.

† Knighton says, that before this plague a curate might have been hired for four or five marks a year, or for two marks and his board; but after it, scarcely any could be found who would accept of a living of twenty marks a year. Archbishop Islip interfered, and forbad any curate to claim an advance of more than one mark yearly. Stow observes upon this limitation, that it induced many priests to turn robbers!

this nature, evidently tended much to strengthen and to prepare the reformer for the arduous course he was shortly called to pursue. That his mind had been led to look to the only true ground of support, is evident from a passage in this tract, wherein he speaks of Christ Jesus as having "entered into holy things, that is into holy church, by holy living and holy teaching; and with his blood he delivered man's nature; as Zechariah writeth in his ninth chapter, Thou verily, with the blood of witness, or of thy testament, hast led out from the pit, them that were bound. So when we were sinful, and the children of wrath, God's Son came out of heaven, and praying his Father for his enemies, he died for us. Then, much rather shall we be saved, now we are made righteous through his blood."

Thus we find Wickliff in his thirty-second year, respected for his scholastic acquirements, deeply impressed with the importance of divine truth, awakened to a sense of the divine judgments, enabled already to break through the bands of superstition, and in possession of that hope which alone can afford refuge for a guilty sinner. We shall now see how these preparations fitted him for the contest, and led him to the encounter in which he was called to engage.

The first circumstance which summoned Wickliff to this conflict was a controversy with the mendicant friars. Some of them had settled at Oxford in 1221, where they attracted much notice by their professed freedom from the avarice of the monastic fraternities in general, and by their activity as preachers. They introduced many of the opinions afterwards adopted by the reformers, for a time saying much in opposition to the papal authority, and in support of the authority of the bible. But their errors and encroaching spirit soon appeared, so that Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, who for some years had favoured the friars, at length deeply censured their conduct. Their zeal to proselyte youths at the universities to their orders, called forth vigorous opposition from Fitzraf, archbishop of Armagh, who, in a petition to the pope in 1357, affirmed that the students of Oxford were reduced on this account to six thousand, not more than a fifth of their former number.* In 1366, a parliamentary enactment ordered that none of the orders should receive any youth under the age of eighteen; also that no bull should be procured by the friars against the universities. Similar disputes then prevailed in the university of Paris. The

* In his tract of Clerks Possessioners, Wickliff complains that "Friars draw children from Christ's religion into their private order, by hypocrisy, lyings, and stealing." He charges them with stealing children from their parents through inducing them to enter their orders, by representing that men of their order would never come to hell, and would have higher degree of bliss in heaven than any other. For an account of Fitzraf, or Armachanus, as he was usually called, see Fox, who gives a summary of his arguments against the friars.

objections alleged against the mendicants, as stated by Wickliff, may be thus summed up:—they represented a life inertly contemplative, as preferable to one spent in active attention to christian duties; they were defective in morals when discharging their office of confessors; while itinerating in the offices they assumed, they persecuted all such as they detected really "travelling to sow God's word among the people;" to these may be added a full proportion of every error and vice which has been charged on the corrupt clergy of Rome. Nor did Wickliff merely expose and seek to correct these fruits of error; he showed that they proceeded from the unscriptural nature of the institutions, which evidently were opposed to those precepts of the bible, which they professed to regard.

Against these mendicants, Wickliff wrote several tracts, entitled Of the property of Christ; Against able Beggary; and of Idleness in Beggary.* The vices of the friars led him to consider more fully the vices of the Romish priesthood.

The approval which the conduct of Wickliff, in opposing the mendicants, received from the university, appears from his being chosen warden of Baliol college in 1361. In the same year he was presented by his college to the living of Fillingham, in Lincolnshire, which he afterwards exchanged for Ludgershall, in Wiltshire. In 1365 he was appointed warden of Canterbury hall, by Simon de Islip, the founder, then primate of England.

In the instrument appointing Wickliff to this office, Islip states him to be a person on whose fidelity, circumspection, and industry he confided, one on whom he had fixed for that place for the honesty of his life, his laudable conversation, and knowledge of letters. Islip dying shortly after, Wickliff was displaced by Langham, his successor, who had been a monk, from whose decision he appealed to the pope.

The integrity and courage of Wickliff are manifest from the boldness with which he continued to oppose the mendicants, both personally and by his writings, during the time his appeal was under consideration.

Another circumstance now occurred which assisted to call Wickliff into public notice. This was the decision of the English parliament in 1365, to resist the claim of pope Urban V. who attempted the revival of an annual payment of a thousand marks,† as a tribute, or feudal acknowledgment, that the kingdoms of England and Ireland were held at the pleasure of the popes. His claim was founded upon the surrender of the crown by king John to pope Innocent III. The payment had been discontinued for thirty-three years, and the recent victories of

* In his writings Wickliff sometimes speaks of the houses of the friars as Cain's castles, (Cain was then so spelt,) alluding to the initial letters of the four mendicant orders, the Carmelites, Augustines, Jacobites, and Minorites. They were commonly called the White, Black, Austin, and Grey friars.

† A mark is 13*s.* 4*d.*

Cressy and Poictiers, with their results, had so far strengthened the power of England, that the present demands by the pontiff, of the arrears, with the continuance of the tribute, upon pain of the papal censure, were unanimously rejected by the king and parliament. The reader must recollect that this was not a question bearing only upon the immediate point in dispute; the grand subject of papal supremacy was involved therein, and the refusal to listen to the mandate of the pope necessarily tended to abridge the general influence of the clergy. A measure of this description was almost unknown in the history of Europe at that day. Such claims were not lightly relinquished by the papacy, and shortly after this decision of the parliament, a monk wrote in defence of the papal usurpations, asserting that the sovereignty of England was forfeited by withholding the tribute, and that the clergy, whether as individuals or as a general body, were exempted from all jurisdiction of the civil power, a claim which had already excited considerable discussions in the preceding reigns. Wickliff was personally called upon by this writer to prove, if he were able, the fallacy of these opinions; nor should it be forgotten that this work did not proceed from any of the mendicant orders, but from one of those monks who were directly opposed to them. Thus it is evident that Wickliff's former conduct was rightly estimated, as proceeding not from one who merely opposed the mendicants, as such, but from one who would oppose the leading errors of the church of Rome, under whatever guise they might appear.

In Wickliff's reply, wherein he has preserved the arguments of the monk, he styles himself one of the royal chaplains. He combats the assumptions of the church of Rome, confirming his sentiments by giving the substance of several speeches delivered by certain of the lay nobility in the recent debate relative to the claims of the pontiff. We need not enter into the contents of this tract farther than to quote the following declaration attributed to one of the speakers, that, "Christ is the supreme Lord, while the pope is a man, and liable to mortal sin, and who while in mortal sin, according to divines, is unfitted for dominion." The extent to which such a principle might be applied, is evident from the well-known wicked lives of the pontiffs, which had led to the monstrous assertion of Romish divines, that the pope, though guilty of the most heinous sins, still was to be obeyed and respected in his mandates; even those which concerned religion.*

* Bellarmine goes farther, he says, "Though the pope should err in enjoining vices, and prohibiting virtues, yet would the church be bound to believe the vices to be virtues, and the virtues vices, if it would avoid sinning against its own conscience." *De Pontif.* iv. 5.

One of the popes says, "The pope, who represents on earth not mere man, but true God, has a heavenly power; and therefore changes the nature of things.—Nor is there any one that can say unto him, Why

The treatise concludes with a view of the future, taken by Wickliff, which has long since been fulfilled. "If I mistake not, the day will come in which all exactions shall cease, before the pope will prove such a condition to be reasonable and honest." Who now in England ventures to assert that the temporal authority of the pope is supreme? or that his ecclesiastics are exempted from the laws of God and their country? yet such doctrines were openly maintained in those ages, and still are asserted in some parts of Europe! The parliament in 1366 also directed regulations to be observed by which the power and influence of the mendicants were limited. In the part taken by the university of Oxford, during these proceedings, Wickliff doubtless was concerned, and the attention given to his arguments on these subjects, which then so deeply agitated the public mind, must have brought his opinions concerning the scriptures, and other points more immediately connected with divine truths, into general notice. Thus attention was called to those doctrines which he now began publicly to advocate. One circumstance which promoted this opposition to the papal claims, was the national animosity then existing between England and France. For many of the popes being natives of France, evinced their partiality for their own country, in which they then resided, on all occasions. All these concurring circumstances led Edward III. to pursue a line of conduct, which certainly characterises him as a promoter of the reformation, at least as to its outward concerns.

John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, claims notice as conspicuous among the court and family of the British monarch, for the countenance and support he afforded to Wickliff. Under his influence an attempt appears to have been made in 1371, by authority of parliament, to exclude ecclesiastics from all offices of state.* Wickliff, in his writings, has so fully shown his deep sense of the necessity for the clergy being exclusively devoted to the duties of their spiritual functions, that we cannot doubt of his intimate connexion with the prince from whom such a proposition originated. The views of Wickliff as to the proper method of discharging the office of minister to the church, will appear by the following extract from one of his early pieces, entitled "A short rule of life." He says, "If thou art a priest, and by name a curate, live thou a holy life. Pass other men in holy prayer, holy desire, and holy speaking; in

dost thou so? For he can dispense laws; he can make justice injustice by altering and amending laws, and he has a fulness of power." *Innocent III. Gloss.* A contemporary of Wickliff openly maintained that the pope was incapable of mortal sin!

* Almost every office of importance or profit was filled by ecclesiastics, from that of lord chancellor, to the surveyor of the king's buildings, and the superintendent of his wardrobe. About this time the chancellor was bishop of Ely; the two latter offices were filled by the parsons of Oundle and Harwich.

counselling and teaching the truth. Ever keep the commandments of God, and let his gospel and his praises be ever in thy mouth. Ever despise sin, that men may be drawn therefrom, and that thy deeds may be so far rightful, that no man shall blame them with reason. Let thy open life be thus a true book, in which the soldier and the layman may learn how to serve God, and keep his commandments. For the example of a good life, if it be open and continued, striketh rude men much more than open preaching with the word alone. And waste not thy goods in great feasts for rich men, but live a frugal life on poor men's alms and goods. Have both meat, and drink, and clothing, but the remnant give truly to the poor; to those who have freely wrought, but who now may not labour from feebleness and sickness; and thus shalt thou be a true priest both to God and to man." These are sentiments which remind us of the early ages of the church, and Wickliff was not one who set forth precepts for others, which he did not practise himself. This and similar passages will be found in the following pages. Nor was he less earnest to enforce due respect for the ministers of religion, as will appear from the following extract. "Thy second father is thy spiritual father, who has special care of thy soul, and thus shalt thou worship (reverence) him. Thou shalt love him especially before other men, and obey his teaching as far as he teaches God's will. And help according to thy power, that he have a reasonable sustenance when he doeth well his office. And if he fail in his office, by giving evil example, and in ceasing from teaching God's law, thou art bound to have great sorrow on that account, and to tell meekly and charitably his default, to him, between thee and him alone."*

In 1370, the papal court decided against the continuance of Wickliff in the wardenship of Canterbury-hall. It was decreed that the inmates should all be monks, notwithstanding the express declarations of the founder, and the terms of the royal license to the contrary. The royal sanction to this sentence was obtained two years afterwards. Among the means employed by his opponents, bribery appears to have been the principal. Wickliff was neither surprised nor troubled by this decision; he does not refer to it in any part of his writings, nor was any imputation cast upon him thereby.

In 1373 Wickliff was admitted to the degree of doctor in divinity. As this rank was at that time unfrequent, and conferred a considerable degree of influence, it must have facilitated the diffusion of the doctrines he advocated throughout the kingdom. Many of his scholastic pieces doubtless were lectures delivered

* Vaughan observes upon this extract; "If Wycliffe ever sanctioned any less mild or scriptural methods of reform, it was because the state of the malady was found to require a severer treatment." In his tracts, For the Order of Priesthood, and the Office of Curates, Wickliff enters very fully into this subject.

by him as professor of divinity, to which office he was appointed in 1372. His early English writings also show both the doctrinal views, and the religious feelings with which he proceeded in his new office. He was skilful in the use of the artificial logic then in vogue, and by accustoming his hearers to enter into logical and metaphysical distinctions, he taught them to exercise their minds upon inquiries, which he gradually directed to more important subjects than those usually introduced into such lectures.

Among these early pieces, the Exposition of the Decalogue, now in the Cotton library, may be included.* As this exposition differs from that which will be found in the present volume, a brief extract or two may be given. Enforcing love to God by keeping his commands, Wickliff says, "Have a remembrance of the goodness of God, how he made thee in his own likeness, and how Jesus Christ, both God and man, died so painful a death upon the cross, to buy man's soul out of hell, even with his own heart's blood, and to bring it to the bliss of heaven." He admonishes that the sabbath not only commemorates the work of creation, but also the resurrection of Christ, and the gift of the Spirit, adding, "Bethink thee heartily of the wonderful kindness of God, who was so high and so worshipful in heaven, that he should come down so low and be born of the maiden, and become our brother, to buy us again by his hard passion, from our thraldom to Satan." After describing the sufferings of Christ, he adds, "All this he did and suffered of his own kindness, without any sin of himself, that he might deliver us from sin and pain, and bring us to everlasting bliss. Thou shouldest also think constantly, how, when he had made thee of nought, thou hadst forsaken him, and all his kindness, through sin, and hadst taken thee to Satan and his service, world without end, had not Christ, God and man, suffered this hard death to save us. And thus, see the great kindness, and all other goodness, which God hath shown for thee, and thereby learn thy own great unkindness; and thus thou shalt see that man is the most fallen of creatures, and the unkindest of all creatures that ever God made! It should be full, sweet, and delightful to us to think thus on this great kindness, and this great love of Jesus Christ!" Mr. Vaughan observes of this exposition, "We find Wycliffe zealously inculcating the lessons of inspiration, on the fall of man and the consequent depravity of human nature; on the excellence and perpetual obligation of the moral law; on the exclusive dependence of every child of Adam on the atonement of Christ for the remission of his sins; and for victory over temptation, and the possession of holiness, on the aids of divine grace. It appears also that these momentous tenets were very far from being regarded by Wycliffe with the coldness of mere speculation."

* See Vaughan's Life of Wickliff, vol. i. p. 303.

The aid which the labours of Wickliff received from the disputes then existing between the popes and the English government, has been already noticed; these differences were again renewed in 1373, on the subject of "provisors." The papal see had been accustomed to grant anticipated vacancies in the English church among its foreign dependents, by which ministers were appointed who were neither able nor willing to discharge the duties of their office. Various legal enactments had been previously made to meet these encroachments, and a law was passed whereby the election of bishops was rendered entirely independent of the papal sanction.

In the year 1360, during the pestilence, seven English bishoprics had become vacant, all of which were filled by aliens, under papal provisions, and the result of inquiry in 1376, showed that a very large number of the English benefices were in the hands of foreigners. An embassy was despatched to the continent in 1374, to remonstrate with the papal see on this subject, and Wickliff was one of the delegates. Bruges was the place appointed for meeting the commissioners of the papal see; the proceedings, as usual in all matters of a similar nature, were protracted by every species of evasion; they continued nearly two years, while the concessions obtained were few and unsatisfactory. Wickliff saw enough during his visit to the continent, to satisfy him more fully of the antichristian character of the papacy. He returned from this treaty, like Cranmer and Luther from Rome, more than ever convinced of the necessity of a thorough reformation in ecclesiastical affairs. He now styled the pope, "antichrist, the proud, worldly priest of Rome, the most cursed of clippers and purse kervers." We find strong expressions in his subsequent writings, but when we refer to the corruptions of the church of Rome, and to the treatment Wickliff received from the Romish ecclesiastics, it may truly be said, "Was there not a cause?"

The public attention was now awakened to the intolerable exactions of the popedom. A parliamentary remonstrance in 1376 states, that the taxes paid to the pope yearly out of England, were five times the amount paid to the king; also that the richest prince in Christendom had not the fourth part of the income received by the pope out of England. These calculations might well call forth the emphatic expression contained in the same document, "that God had committed his sheep to the pope to be pastured, and not to be shorn or shaven."

In November 1375, Wickliff was presented by the king to a prebend in the collegiate church of Westbury, and shortly after to the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, at that time in the royal gift by the minority of lord de Ferrars, the patron. He was speedily called to take a still more prominent part in public affairs.

At that period a severe political struggle existed between the duke of Lancaster and the leading ecclesiastics, among

whom Courtney, bishop of London, and Wykeham of Winchester, were most distinguished. The particulars need not here be detailed; it is sufficient to say that the transactions were complicated. It is only to the unbounded influence of the Romish priesthood over the consciences of men, that we can attribute the popular excitement against the reformer and his friends, which the prelates succeeded in raising. It is, perhaps, less easy to explain how the parliament, which assembled in 1376 and 1377, should have been opposed both to the encroachments of the papacy and to the administration of the duke of Lancaster.

The clergy were evidently displeased at proceedings against some of their number, and at this period, for the first time, we find them adverting to the doctrines of Wickliff, as calling for official interference. This doubtless was intended as an attack both upon the doctrines of the reformer, and the power of his patron.

In the convocation which met in February 1377,* Wickliff was cited to appear before his ecclesiastical superiors, to answer certain charges brought against him for holding and publishing erroneous and heretical doctrines. A day was appointed for hearing his defence, and the scene which ensued is thus described by Fox from the chronicle of St. Albans.

"When the day assigned to the said Wickliff to appear was come, which day was Thursday, the 19th of February,† John Wickliff went, accompanied with the duke of Lancaster, also four friars appointed by the duke, the better to ensure Wickliff's safety, and lord Henry Percy, lord marshal of England; lord Percy going before to make room and way where Wickliff should come.

"Thus Wickliff, through the providence of God, being sufficiently guarded, was coming to the place where the bishops sat. By the way they animated and exhorted him not to fear nor shrink a whit at the company of the bishops there present, who were all unlearned, said they, in respect of him,—for so proceed the words of my author, whom I follow in this narration; neither should he dread the concourse of the people, whom they would themselves assist and defend, in such sort that he should take no harm. With these words, and with the assistance of the nobles, Wickliff, encouraged in heart, approached the church of St. Paul, where a main press of people was gathered to hear what should be said and done. Such was the throng of the multitude, that the lords, for all the puissance of the high marshal, scarcely, with great difficulty, could get way through. Insomuch that Courtney, bishop of London, seeing the stir which the lord marshal kept in the church among the people, speaking to the lord Percy, said, That if he had

* Lewis, by mistake, assigns this transaction to the year following.

† A. D. 1377.

known before what masteries he would have kept in the church, he would have stopped him out from coming there. At which words of the bishop the duke disdaining not a little, answered the bishop again, That he would keep such mastery there, though he said, Nay.

"At last, after much wrangling, they pierced through, and came to our lady's chapel, where the dukes and barons were sitting together with the archbishops and bishops, before whom John Wickliff stood, to know what should be laid unto him. To whom first spake the lord Percy, bidding him to sit down, saying, that he had many things to answer to, and therefore had need of some softer seat. But the bishop of London, cast eftsoons into a fumish chafe with those words, said, He should not sit there. Neither was it, said he, according to law or reason, that he, who was cited there to appear to answer before his ordinary, should sit down during the time of his answer, but he should stand. Upon these words a fire began to heat and kindle between them. Insomuch that they began so to rate and revile one the other, that the whole multitude, therewith disquieted, began to be set on a hurry.

"Then the duke, taking the lord Percy's part, with hasty words began also to take up the bishop. To whom the bishop again, nothing inferior in reproachful checks and rebukes, did render and requite not only to him as good as he brought; but also did so far excel him in this railing art of scolding, that, to use the words of mine author, the duke blushed, and was ashamed, because he could not overpass the bishop in brawling and railing. He therefore fell to plain threatening, menacing the bishop, that he would bring down the pride not only of him, but also of all the prelacy of England. Speaking moreover unto him; Thou, said he, bearest thyself so brag upon thy parents, which shall not be able to help thee; they shall have enough to do to help themselves. His parents were the earl and countess of Devonshire. To whom the bishop again answered, that to be bold to tell truth, his confidence was not in his parents, nor in any man else, but only in God in whom he trusted. Then the duke softly whispering in the ear of him next by him, said, that he would rather pluck the bishop by the hair of his head out of the church, than he would take this at his hand. This was not spoken so secretly, but that the Londoners overheard him. Whereupon, being set in rage, they cried out, saying, that they would not suffer their bishop so contemptuously to be abused, but rather they would lose their lives, than that he should be so drawn out by the hair. Thus the council being broken with scolding and brawling for that day, was dissolved before nine of the clock."

Some proceedings having been taken by the duke and lord Percy, which affected the liberties of the citizens, a tumult ensued on the day following. Information was brought to the duke at the Savoy, of the approach of the infuriated Londoners.

The duke "being then at his oysters, without any further tarrying, and also breaking both his shins at a form for haste," took boat with the lord Percy, and by water went to Richmond, where the princess regent was, with Richard, the young king. By her interference the Londoners were compelled to humble themselves, and to make a great taper of wax with the duke's arms upon it, at the charge of the city, which was carried in procession, and placed in the chapel of Our Lady, in St. Paul's, to burn before the image of the virgin!

From February to October, 1377, Wickliff seems to have been occupied in discharging his duties as rector and professor. During this interval Edward III. died. The accession of Richard II. was followed by a diminution of the influence of John of Gaunt, but the opposition to the papal claims was not less decided. Amongst other subjects, the next parliament seriously discussed whether it would not be lawful for the kingdom, in case of necessity, and as a means of its defence, to detain its treasure, that it be not conveyed to foreign nations, though the pope himself should demand the same under pain of his censures, and by virtue of obedience said to be due to him. An answer to this question would not now be considered a matter of doubt or difficulty, but at that time it was a perplexing subject. In fact it involved most important questions both of a civil and a religious nature. Under this dilemma the opinion of Wickliff was requested. In his reply he discarded the opinions and decisions of civilians, or other human authorities. He considered the proper reference to be "to the principles of the law of Christ." The nature of the pope's demands sufficiently indicate the result of such an appeal!

The doctrines of Wickliff were now publicly known. The ecclesiastics had not remained indifferent to the consequences, as affecting their interests and their power. A number of his opinions were censured by the pope, and in June 1377, bulls were issued, addressed to the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of London, the king, and the university of Oxford, in which the pope required that Wickliff should be seized and imprisoned under the papal authority, that his confession should be received, distinct information of his tenets obtained, and that he should be detained in custody until further instructions were sent concerning him. If he were not apprehended, citations were to be issued, commanding his attendance before the pope within three months; the utmost care was to be taken to prevent the king and the nobility from being defiled with his errors. The bulls, however, were not made public till after the parliamentary proceeding just mentioned.

These harsh mandates, it will be observed, treated Wickliff as a criminal already condemned; the prelates were merely to inform themselves privately whether Wickliff had taught the

doctrines imputed to him. Such was the inquisitorial policy of the Romish ecclesiastics! The university of Oxford did not receive this bull without considerable hesitation, though accompanied by an especial letter from the pope, lamenting that tares were suffered to grow up among the pure wheat in that seat of learning, and even to grow ripe, without any care being applied to root them up. Not the smallest intention of placing Wickliff in the power of his enemies was manifested by the heads of the university. Archbishop Sudbury, however, wrote to the chancellor, enjoining him to cite Wickliff to appear before his superiors, and early in 1378, Wickliff attended a synod at Lambeth. The duke of Lancaster no longer retained his political power, but the deep impression Wickliff's doctrines had made upon the people was now apparent. Considerable crowds surrounded the place; many forced an entrance, openly declaring their attachment to the reformer; and sir Lewis Clifford, in the name of the queen mother, forbad the bishops from proceeding to any definitive sentence.

On this occasion Wickliff delivered a written statement of his opinions, which has been unfairly represented as an artful attempt to evade the consequences of his doctrines by apologies and explanations. This is not correct:—many things had been laid to his charge which he knew not; some were utterly false, while others he had not yet maintained. It was, therefore, rather a proof of ingenuousness than of artifice, to attempt an explanation of his real views, and it is by no means certain that this document has come down to us without mutilation from his enemies. Yet, if the whole be attended to, and allowance be made for the scholastic forms of argument, from which Wickliff had not been emancipated, his statements will not be considered as evasive. These articles are given at length by Lewis, from Walsingham, and are fully abstracted by Vaughan. If the reader finds less distinct reference than he expected to the great truths of the christian faith, he must not be surprised. In controversy, the Romish church has usually kept these all important subjects out of sight; or rather they are admitted in form, while in effect they are denied. The points controverted with Wickliff chiefly related to the authority of the pope and the powers of the priesthood; the doctrine of transubstantiation was the great subject of inquiry in the sixteenth century. Few, excepting Luther, succeeded in bringing their opponents into direct discussion upon the point which in fact was the main subject at issue, namely whether salvation was to be obtained only by faith in Christ, or whether other mediators and means of remission of sin were to be looked to. Of these explanations it will suffice to say, that so far from having made decided statements, and retracted them by subsequent explanations, Wickliff repeated the sentiments deemed

most obnoxious, in his subsequent treatises, while he ever professed his readiness to retract, if his conclusions were proved to be opposed to the faith.*

The papal authority at this time suffered from other causes in addition to the attacks of the advocates of reformation. On the death of pope Gregory XI. in March 1378, a schism took place which exhibited the church of Rome with two, and sometimes three different heads at the same time; each pretending to infallibility, and all denouncing curses against their opponents, in most awful terms.† To the death of Gregory XI. and these distractions, the escape of Wickliff from the vengeance of the clergy, may partly be attributed. The general feeling of the necessity for reformation was also promoted, and Wickliff was not wanting in exertions to expose the vain and wicked pretensions of these unchristian pretenders to infallibility. In a tract entitled, "On the schism of the popes," he made a direct attack upon the papal usurpations.

Amidst these labours and persecutions Wickliff was assailed by sickness. While at Oxford he was confined to his chamber, and reports of his approaching dissolution were circulated. The mendicants considered this to be a favourable opportunity for obtaining a recantation of his declarations against them. Perhaps they concluded that the sick-bed of Wickliff would resemble many others they had witnessed, and that their power would be there felt and acknowledged. A doctor from each of the privileged orders of beggars, attended by some of the civil authorities of the city, entered the chamber of Wickliff. They at first expressed sympathy for his sufferings, with hopes for his recovery. They then suggested that he must be aware of the wrongs the mendicants had experienced from him, especially by his sermons, and other writings; as death now appeared at hand, they concluded that he must have feelings of compunction on this account; therefore they expressed their hope that he would not conceal his penitence, but distinctly recall whatever he had hitherto said against them.

The suffering reformer listened to this address unmoved. When it was concluded, he made signs for his attendants to raise him in his bed, then fixing his eyes on the mendicants,

* Vaughan has shown that the writings in which he used more decided expressions against the papacy, were not written till *after* this period. This is important, as evidencing that Wickliff did not resort to equivocation or evasion, but that, like Luther, his views became clearer, as his opinions were called in question. "Rome was not denounced as antichrist till Rome had become his prosecutor."

† Platina, the Romish historian, says, "In the time of Urban VI. arose the 22d (or 26th) schism, of all schisms the worst, and the most puzzling. For it was so intricate that not even the most learned and conscientious were able to decide to which of the pretenders they were to adhere, and it was continued till the time of Martin V." (more than forty years.)

he summoned all his remaining strength, and loudly exclaimed, "I shall not die, but live, and shall again declare the evil deeds of the friars." The appalled doctors, with their attendants, hurried from the room; and they speedily found the prediction fulfilled. The scene would afford a striking subject for an able artist.

While Wickliff strongly censured the fabulous legends and crafty delusions practised by these orders, he by no means neglected the means of usefulness they so much misapplied. He was not less distinguished as a preacher than as a theologian, or a controversialist. Milton well speaks of Wickliff's preaching, as a saving light at which succeeding reformers effectually lighted their tapers.

Nearly three hundred of his sermons have escaped the destruction to which his writings were subjected. The plain simplicity of their language and style show that he was not less fitted for the humble, yet important station, of a village pastor, than to fill the office of ambassador to the pope, or to consider matters of state referred to him by the highest authorities of the land. That he was an active preacher is evident, and there can be no doubt but that he discharged the other duties of his function according to what he has himself pointed out to be the duty of the christian man, "to visit those who are sick, or who are in trouble, especially those whom God hath made needy by age, or by other sickness, as the feeble, the blind, and the lame, who are in poverty. These thou shalt relieve with thy goods after thy power, and after their need, for thus biddeth the gospel." Upon the importance of preaching in all ages of the church it is unnecessary to enlarge, but certainly it was peculiarly important in those times, when little but oral instruction could be imparted, and the invention of printing was unknown.

Wickliff's sermons are seldom to be considered as essays upon particular subjects; frequently they are only sketches, or heads of his discourses, but they are almost invariably what were then called postills—discourses founded upon passages of scripture, the various parts of which are considered in succession. This method was most usual, both in the primitive church and among the reformers who followed Wickliff. In general, the discourses are founded upon the gospel, the epistle, or the lesson for the day, and are supposed to have been delivered at Lutterworth, during the eight years he was rector of that place. They are strictly of a popular character, as will be seen from the specimens in the present volume. In one of these discourses he speaks of the labours of Christ and his apostles as teachers. They are touched upon in a manner which shows that he recommended a similar course to be pursued in the times in which he lived, and the testimonies of historians inform us that the teachers among the Lollards went about in this manner, testifying of the things of the kingdom of heaven. He

says, "The gospel telleth us the duty which falls to all the disciples of Christ, and also telleth us how priests, both high and low, should occupy themselves in the church of God and in serving him. And first, Jesus himself did indeed the lessons which he taught. The gospel relates how Jesus went about in the places of the country, both great and small, as in cities and castles, or small towns, and this to teach us to profit generally unto men, and not to forbear to preach to a people because they are few, and our name may not, in consequence, be great. For we should labour for God, and from him hope for our reward. There is no doubt that Christ went into small uplandish towns, as to Bethphage, and Cana in Galilee; for Christ went to all those places where he wished to do good. And he laboured not thus for gain, for he was not smitten either with pride or with covetousness." In another discourse he says, "It was ever the manner of Jesus to speak the words of God, wherever he knew that they would be profitable to others who heard them: and hence Christ often preached, now at meat, and now at supper, and indeed at whatever time it was convenient for others to hear him."

Another still more important labour of Wickliff claims our attention—his translation of the scriptures into the English tongue, which occupied him for many years. It was completed in 1383. The first honour of this great undertaking clearly belongs to Wickliff, and no event recorded in the annals of our land can be compared with it for importance. The attempts made by others had neither been numerous nor extensive. They were only versions of the psalms and some other portions of sacred writ, and detract not from the labour or merit of Wickliff's performance.* A well-known passage from the historical work of Knighton, a canon of Leicester, the contemporary of Wickliff, contains evidence upon this subject too decisive not to be repeated here. He says, "Christ delivered his gospel to the clergy and doctors of the church, that they might administer to the laity and to weaker persons, according to the state of the times, and the wants of man. But this master John Wickliff translated it out of Latin into English, and thus laid it more open to the laity, and to women who can read, than it formerly had been to the most learned of the clergy, even to those of them who had the best understanding. And in this way the gospel pearl is cast abroad, and trodden under foot of swine, and that which was before precious both to clergy and laity, is rendered as it were the common jest of both! The jewel of the church is turned into the sport of the people, and what was hitherto the principal gift of the clergy and divines is made for ever common to the laity."

The cautious English historian of modern Romanists expresses

* The Rev. H. Baber's account of the English and Saxon versions of the scriptures, contains much valuable information upon this subject.

the same opinion as Knighton, though in more guarded language. He says, "Wickliff made a new translation, (of the scriptures,) multiplied the copies with the aid of transcribers, and by his 'poor priests,' recommended it to the perusal of their hearers. In their hands it became an engine of wonderful power. Men were flattered by the appeal to their private judgment; the new doctrines insensibly acquired partisans and protectors in the higher classes, who alone were acquainted with the use of letters; a spirit of inquiry was generated, and the seeds were sown of that religious revolution, which in little more than a century astonished and convulsed the nations of Europe."

In conformity to these apprehensions, the advocates of the church of Rome have ever denounced, in terms more or less measured, all attempts to communicate to the people in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God for the salvation of a guilty world. The diffusion of this light and knowledge, they well know, will certainly bring the fabric of ecclesiastical domination to the dust, and therefore the church of Rome has EVER objected to allow free perusal of the scriptures to the laity.

But a spirit of inquiry had been awakened, and Wickliff well knew that no method could be devised so effectual for making men wise unto salvation, as to supply them with the scriptures. What assistance he had in this work is not known, but it is evident that copies were multiplied with a rapidity which we can hardly appreciate at the present day.

From the register of Alnwick, bishop of Norwich, in 1429, it appears that the cost of a testament of Wickliff's version, was 2*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.* (equal to more than 20*l.* of our present money.) At that time five pounds were considered a sufficient allowance for the annual maintenance of a tradesman, yeoman, or a curate. In the persecution under bishop Longland, in 1521, when severe penalties, perhaps death, followed merely possessing such a work, the accusation against one man was the having paid twenty shillings for a bible in English; probably only some detached books.

This translation was made from the Latin vulgate. Scarcely any persons then were acquainted with the original languages of the scriptures. Wickliff took considerable pains to collect copies, and procured as correct a text as possible for his version.

The circulation of the English scriptures was so offensive to the clergy, that in 1390 the prelates brought forward a bill in the house of lords, for suppressing Wickliff's translations. The duke of Lancaster is said to have interfered on this occasion; boldly declaring, "We will not be the dregs of all, seeing that other nations have the law of God, which is the law of our faith, written in their own language." He added that he would maintain our having the divine law in our own tongue, against those, whoever they should be, who first brought in the bill. The duke being seconded by others, the bill was thrown out. Three years previously, in 1387, a severe statute had been

revived at Oxford, which is thus described in a prologue for the English bible, which was written by one of Wickliff's followers: "Alas, the greatest abomination that ever was heard among christian clerks is now purposed in England by worldly clerks and feigned religious, and in the chief university of our realm, as many true men tell with great wailing. This horrible and devilish cursedness is purposed of Christ's enemies, and traitors of all christian people, that no man shall learn divinity, nor holy writ, but he that hath done his form in art, that is, who hath commenced in arts, and hath been regent two years after. Thus it would be nine or ten years before he might learn holy writ."

The subsequent and more successful endeavours of the Romish clergy to prevent the circulation of the English scriptures will be noticed in the account of the followers of Wickliff.

In 1381, the troubles among the commons, known as the insurrections of Wat Tyler and others, broke out. A very slight acquaintance with the history of England sufficiently explains the causes of these tumultuary proceedings, which were wholly unconnected with the doctrines or labours of Wickliff, who in his writings strongly urged the due subordination of different ranks of men. Nor should it be forgotten that tumults of a far more sanguinary description, and marked by deeper atrocities, had about this period raged in France and Flanders, where the doctrines of our reformer were unknown. Froissart, a contemporary historian, attributes the proceedings of the English insurgents to the example set them on the continent. Other atrocious deeds, perpetrated as national acts in neighbouring countries within our own recollection, might be referred to, were it at all needful to show that tumults and rebellions are not the results of opposition to popery;* but it ever has been a favourite plan of that church, to endeavour dexterously to fasten upon its adversaries charges which properly appertain to itself.

Wickliff's opposition to the dogma of transubstantiation is now to be noticed. This doctrine was first openly maintained in the west, by Radbert, a French monk in the ninth century,

* Vaughan has examined this subject very fully. He relates several instances of tumultuary insurrections evidently proceeding from the fanaticism of popery. The real cause of the tumults in England, probably was rightly stated by the parliament; "These injuries, lately done to the poorer commons, more than they ever suffered before, caused them to rise and to commit the mischief done in the late riot."

The Romish ecclesiastics also were guilty of considerable oppression. Wickliff in one of his tracts complains that, "Where in many abbeys should be, and sometimes were, great houses to harbour poor men therein, now they are fallen down, or made swine cotes, stables, or bark houses, and the abbots make costly feasts, waste many goods on lords and rich men, suffering poor men to starve, and perish for hunger and other mischiefs." Lewis adds, "So far were the religious at that time from relieving all the poor of the nation at their gates."

but it was not fully sanctioned by the church of Rome till the third Lateran council, under Innocent III. in 1215. So doubtful had the popes been at first respecting this doctrine, that one of them feigned a revelation from the virgin in opposition to it.

One of the Saxon homilies thus states the doctrine held by the early English church upon this subject: "Much (difference) is between the body Christ suffered in, and the body hallowed to housell, (the sacrament;) this latter being only his spiritual body gathered of many corns, without blood or bone, without limb, without soul; and therefore nothing is to be understood therein bodily, but all is to be spiritually understood."

Transubstantiation was not held by the Anglo-Saxon church, but had been introduced after the Norman conquest by Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury. Wickliff had touched upon this subject in some of his treatises, the most popular of which, his "Wicket," forms a part of the present volume, but he seems to have brought his views forward with increased activity in his divinity lectures during the spring of 1381, when he published a series of conclusions in which he called the attention of the members of the university to the subject. In these he stated that "the consecrated host, which we see upon the altar, is neither Christ nor any part of him, but an effectual sign of him." On these conclusions Wickliff offered to dispute publicly.

In his Trialogus, (lib. iv. ch. 7.) Wickliff represents Satan as reasoning thus respecting transubstantiation. "Should I once so far beguile the faithful of the church, by the aid of antichrist my vicegerent, as to persuade them to deny that this sacrament is bread, and to induce them to regard it merely as an accident; there will be nothing then which I may not bring them to receive, since there can be nothing more opposite to the scriptures or to common discernment. Let the life of a prelate then be what it may, let him be guilty of luxury, simony, or murder, the people may be led to believe that really he is no such man; nay, they may then be persuaded to admit, that the pope is infallible, at least with respect to the matters of christian faith, and that inasmuch as he is known by the name of most holy father, he is of course free from sin." How completely had the powerful mind of Wickliff discerned the dreadful consequences of this monstrous doctrine, which represents a piece of bread as containing the flesh and blood, and even the soul and divine nature of our blessed Lord!

A convention of Romish doctors speedily assembled; the doctrines of Wickliff were condemned, as may easily be supposed. Sentences of excommunication and imprisonment were fulminated against all members of the university, who should teach his tenets, or even be convicted of listening to arguments in defence of them.

This assembly was held in private; its determination was communicated to Wickliff while engaged in lecturing his pupils. He paused for a moment, and then again challenged his opponents to a fair discussion of the subject, declaring that if

attempts were made to silence him by force, he would appeal to the king for protection.

Courtney, who had been recently appointed archbishop of Canterbury, in May, 1382, called a synod to consider respecting certain strange and dangerous opinions then widely diffused, among both the nobility and the commons of England. His well-known hatred to Wickliff sufficiently indicated the objects in view. The synod was held at the Grey Friars, in London. It had scarcely assembled when the city was shaken by an earthquake, which the members interpreted as evidence of the divine displeasure at the objects for which they were then collected. But Courtney was not a slave to superstitious fears; "he comforted them by putting them in mind that they should not be slothful in the cause of the church, that the earthquake in reality portended a cleansing of the kingdom from heresies. For as air and noxious spirits are shut up in the bowels of the earth, which are expelled in an earthquake, and so the earth is cleansed, but not without great violence, so there were many heresies shut up in the hearts of reprobate men, but by the condemnation of them the kingdom has been cleared, but not without irksomeness and great commotion."

The assembled divines were thus reassured, and the conclusions imputed to Wickliff were condemned as erroneous and heretical. The sentence denounced against all who should hold, preach, or defend his tenets, was promulgated with the usual solemnities, and addressed to all places subject to the see of Canterbury. These fulminations were communicated to the university of Oxford, but the chancellor and many of its leading members were attached to the reformer, and the public discourses before the university highly commended the character and doctrines of Wickliff.

The state of public affairs strengthened the efforts of the clergy; a few months before, they had procured the enactment of a law by the parliament, which provided for the punishment of those who preached what the ecclesiastics denominated heresy. The preamble of the statute evidently refers to the labours of the followers of Wickliff, and to the promulgation of such doctrines as he advanced. They were extensively diffused: a contemporary historian represents every second person in the kingdom as infected with his heresies, and in Wickliff's confession respecting the sacrament, he implies that a third part of the clergy held similar opinions.

The statute sets forth that divers evil persons went from county to county, and town to town, in certain habits, under dissimulation of great holiness, without license of the ordinaries or other authorities, preaching daily, not only in churches and churchyards, but also in markets, fairs, and other open places, where great congregations were assembled, divers sermons containing heresies and notorious errors, &c. &c. It was therefore enacted, that all such preachers, and also their favourers, maintainers,

and abettors, should be "arrested, and held in strong prison," till they "justify themselves according to the law and reason of holy church," before the prelates.

This law was passed by the lords, but never had the assent of the commons, so that in reality it was both informal and invalid. In the following October it was revoked and laid aside; but the archbishop procured letters patent from the king, whereby he and his suffragans were authorized to detain all such offenders in their own prisons, and by the artifices of the prelate, the act of repeal was suppressed. This was the commencement of a series of bloody enactments, whereby the consciences of Englishmen were enthralled, and the best and holiest characters of the land were subjected to the severest persecution and most horrible cruelties. No traces of such laws appear previously on our statute book, and these notoriously emanated from the Romish priesthood, upon feeling their craft to be in danger. It is evident that they proceeded not from the peculiar opinions of that day, or the maxims of state policy then prevalent, but entirely from the fiend-like desire of the popish ecclesiastics to persecute for conscience sake.

Courtney having arranged his machinery for persecution, summoned Rigge, the chancellor of Oxford, and Brightwell, one of his doctors, to answer for their late conduct respecting Hereford and Rippington, who had advocated the cause of Wickliff. After some hesitation, they were induced to assent to the articles lately sanctioned by the synod. The chancellor was enjoined to search for Wickliff, Hereford, Rippington, Ashton, and Redman, and by ecclesiastical censures and canonical penalties to compel them to abjure. Meanwhile the archbishop proceeded in his prosecution of Hereford and Ashton; the former had assisted Wickliff in his translation of the scriptures, the latter was well known throughout the kingdom as a laborious and successful preacher of the gospel.

Wickliff then resided at Lutterworth. In one of his sermons he refers to these persecutions. Speaking of Courtney as "the great bishop of England, who is incensed because God's law is written in English to unlearned men," he adds, "He pursueth a certain priest because he writeth to men this English, and summoneth him, and travaileth him, so that it is hard for him to bear it. And thus he pursueth another priest, by the help of pharisees, because he preacheth Christ's gospel freely, without fables." Hereford appears to have escaped from "the bitterness of death," probably through the influence of the duke of Lancaster, but he, outwardly at least, reconciled himself to his opponents, as he was among the clergy who, in 1391, sat in judgment upon one of the Lollards, named Walter Brute, though he still retained an attachment to the doctrines of Wickliff. Rippington acted in a similar manner, but Ashton died as he had lived, a follower of the truth, before the clergy had proceeded so far as openly to bring the Lollards to the stake.

The accounts respecting these men, however, are contradictory, and their enemies appear to have attributed to them greater concessions than they really made, a practice not unfrequent with the church of Rome. Some farther particulars respecting them will be found in another part of this work.

The conduct of the clergy, and the means they had recourse to, are thus described by Wickliff in one of his discourses at this period. "Our high priests and our religious fear them, lest God's law, after all they have done, should be quickened. Therefore make they statutes, stable as a rock, and they obtain grace (favour) of knights to confirm them, and this they mark well with the witness of lords, and all lest the truth of God's law should break out to the knowing of the common people. Well I know, that knights have taken gold in this case, to help that thy law may be thus hid, and thine ordinances consumed."

Wickliff had seen the storm gathering fast, while increasing age and infirmities rendered him less able to counteract the proceedings of his adversaries. He knew not how soon the blow might be struck. Thus situated, he resolved to appeal, in the form of a petition, to the king and parliament. This document contains opinions for which some protestant writers have too hastily been inclined to censure the reformer, without considering the situation in which matters then stood, or the characters whom Wickliff denounced as worldly priests and of the congregation of Satan.

The proceedings against Wickliff are not very clearly stated, but it appears that in 1382, a council of prelates and clergy was held in the church of the preaching friars at London as already mentioned, and a similar council was afterwards assembled at Oxford, to take measures for remedying certain disorders which were extending rapidly through the whole community. Courtney having made the requisite preparations, Wickliff was summoned to appear, that he might answer for his opinions. The Romish prelate laid his plans, so as to deprive Wickliff of the support and countenance he had hitherto received. While the nobility opposed the church on points of worldly interest, they gladly encouraged Wickliff in his opposition, though it originated from higher sources than those of a secular nature; but at this critical period, the duke of Lancaster felt that it was his interest to avoid farther hostilities with the clergy, and as Courtney had placed the matters at issue on points of doctrine, the duke advised Wickliff to submit to the prelates in all points of that nature. Here human aid failed the reformer, as might be expected. The world may contend upon subjects of a religious nature, when interest is concerned, but not when there is reason to expect only trouble and loss for so doing.

Had Wickliff then shrunk from the contest—had he sacrificed the truth to avoid the risk of encountering his adversaries, there might have been some ground for characterising him as a political reformer, even though the hesitation had proceeded from

age and infirmity rather than from any other source. But he shrunk not. The Romish historian Walsingham, who is ever desirous to cast any disgrace he can upon the reformer, represents him as equally withstanding the commands of the duke, and the threats of the primate. He says, that Wickliff in publicly defending his doctrines on the sacrament of the altar, "like an obstinate heretic, refuted all the doctors of the second millenary."* Wickliff did not consider the doctrine of transubstantiation to be a mere dogma of the schools, he viewed it as a worshipping of the creature more than the Creator, and perceived all its attendant consequences of setting up will-worship, and other mediators than the Lord Jesus Christ.

The assembly convoked at Oxford, by whom Wickliff's doctrines were condemned, was numerous and eminent for rank and authority. He stood alone in the place where he once had delivered the doctrines of truth to approving auditories, but now he was forsaken. With the apostle Paul he might have said, "At mine answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me." With that apostle he experienced that the Lord stood by him, and strengthened him, and he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. His defence, as we have seen, was such as to demand praise from his adversaries, and his written confessions recapitulated his former views upon the subject. There were two—one in Latin, in which he argued the subject after the scholastic method, the other in English, which he drew up so as to be intelligible to the people.†

Courtney and his associates probably felt at a loss how to act towards the reformer. As yet they had not found any who resisted unto blood, nor had they arrived at the decision with which their successors put the summary requisition, "Turn or burn." They appear at that time to have contented themselves with terminating Wickliff's connexion with the university of Oxford. A mandate from the king was addressed to the vice-chancellor, dated July, 1382, ordering the expulsion of Wickliff and his adherents from the university, within seven days. Probably the increasing age and infirmities of the reformer indicated his speedy removal from this world, and inclined his enemies to suspend more violent and unpopular measures.

The next proceeding was a summons from the pope ordering Wickliff to appear before him at Rome. He was too much afflicted with paralysis, to undertake such a journey, even had it been a desirable plan for him to adopt. He addressed a letter to the pope, professing his faith, expressing his willingness to retract any opinions which might be proved to be erroneous, and his hope that personal appearance before the pontiff would not be insisted upon.

Although Wickliff was excluded from Oxford, and age advanced rapidly upon him, he did not cease to labour for the

* The writers subsequent to the first thousand years after Christ.

† For this confession, see p. 46.

welfare of the souls of men. His translation of the scriptures was completed about this period. The greater part also of his tracts and sermons appear to have been composed during the latter years of his life. They were written out, and circulated with avidity—the numerous copies of his writings yet remaining, show the extent to which they must have been transcribed, especially when we consider that the Romish clergy destroyed not a few.

Among these pieces is an address written against the friars, in which, commenting on the text, "Beware of the leaven of the pharisees which is hypocrisy," Wickliff directs against the followers of St. Francis and St. Dominic of that day, the censures addressed to the pharisees of Judea of old. His feelings of abhorrence at the proceedings of his old antagonists, had been renewed by their activity in behalf of pope Urban against his opponent pope Clement. Each of the popes endeavoured to stimulate his adherents to take up arms against his rival, by the same promises of spiritual blessings, and the same denunciations of divine wrath, as had been used to obtain supporters to the crusades or military expeditions for the recovery of the holy land from the infidels. These military expeditions were represented as equally meritorious, and were designated by the same title, while all the nefarious practices employed in support of the crusades were employed on the present occasion. The bishop of Norwich raised a considerable army by the bulls of pope Urban, promising full remission of sins, and a place in paradise to all who assisted his cause by money or in person! This military prelate headed his troops, and invaded France, by which kingdom pope Clement was supported in his pretensions. But his campaign was unsuccessful; he returned to England in a few months with the scanty remains of his army, and was the subject of general derision.

Against such proceedings Wickliff spoke boldly. He says, "Christ is a good shepherd, for he puts his own life for the saving of the sheep. But antichrist is a ravening wolf, for he ever does the reverse, putting many thousand lives for his own wretched life. By forsaking things which Christ has bid his priests forsake, he might end all this strife. Why is he not a fiend stained foul with homicide, who, though a priest, fights in such a cause? If manslaying in others be odious to God, much more in priests who should be the vicars of Christ. And I am certain that neither the pope, nor all the men of his council, can produce a spark of reason to prove that he should do this." Wickliff speaks of the two popes, as fighting one against the other with the most blasphemous leasings (or falsehoods) that ever sprang out of hell. But "they were occupied," he adds, "many years before in blasphemy, and in sinning against God and his church. And this made them to sin more, as an ambling blind horse, when he beginneth to stumble, continues to stumble until he casts himself down." Several passages written by Wickliff at this time, express his condemnation of all warfare unless in self-defence,

and as sanctioned by the new testament. The scenes of slaughter, cruelty, and profligacy, occasioned by this papal schism, are lated by historians.

The danger incurred by Wickliff in his proceedings, now was greater than ever, but he pursued his course with stedfastness to the last. "The language of his conduct" has been well described, as being to this effect; "To live, and to be silent is with me impossible—the guilt of such treason against the Lord of heaven is more to be dreaded than many deaths. Let the blow therefore fall. Enough I know of the men whom I oppose, of the times on which I am thrown, and of the mysterious providence which relates to our sinful race, to expect that the stroke will ere long descend. But my purpose is unalterable, I wait its coming."*

The stroke, however, was stayed; the duke of Lancaster was still considered as the patron of Wickliff, the popes were occupied by their mutual contests, the political distractions of England absorbed the attention of all the leading characters, and Wickliff was permitted to pass the short remainder of his days without interruption from the hand of violence. He had also a constant patroness in Anne of Bohemia, queen of Richard II., who was eminent for her piety and blameless conduct. For two years previously to his decease, Wickliff was paralytic, and had the assistance of a curate named Purvey, who partook of his master's sentiments, but he continued himself to officiate. It is said that he was engaged in distributing the bread of the Lord's supper, when seized with the last and fatal attack of paralysis. He was at once deprived of consciousness and the power of speech. After a brief struggle, his spirit left the earth, and found a joyful refuge in another and a better world. He was taken ill on the 29th, and died on the 31st of December, 1384.

Wickliff was buried in peace, but in the year 1415 the council of Constance ordered his remains to be disinterred, and cast forth from consecrated ground. This was not enforced till 1428, when by command of the pope, forty-four years after his interment, his bones were digged up, and burned to ashes, which were then cast into the brook hard by. Fox observes, "And so was he resolved into three elements, earth, fire, and water; they thinking thereby to abolish both the name and doctrine of Wickliff for ever. Not much unlike to the example of the old pharisees and sepulchre knights, who, when they had brought the Lord to the grave, thought to make him sure never to rise again. But these and all others must know, that as there is no council against the Lord; so there is no keeping down of verity, but it will spring and come out of dust and ashes, as appeared right well in this man. For though they digged up his body, burned his bones, and drowned his ashes, yet the word of God and truth of his doctrine, with the fruit and success

* Vaughan ii. p. 257.

thereof, they could not burn, which yet TO THIS DAY, for the most part of his articles, do remain, notwithstanding the transitory body and bones of the man was thus consumed and dispersed."

Some farther observations on this treatment of the remains of this illustrious reformer, with a brief account of his principal followers, and a sketch of the measures progressively adopted for the suppression of the truths he had advocated, will be found in another part of the present work. His writings and the doctrines he taught now claim our attention.

Writings of Wickliff.

Soon after the decease of Wickliff, an English prelate stated that the writings of the reformer were as voluminous as those of Augustine. Those which are still extant, would make several large volumes, and embrace a great number and variety of subjects. Bale, who wrote a century and a half subsequent to Wickliff's death, states that he had seen more than a hundred and fifty of his works, partly in Latin and partly in English, and that he had ascertained the titles of more than a hundred others. Many of the latter, however, most probably, were only different names for pieces which Bale had seen, for amongst the manuscripts yet existing, the same piece is sometimes designated by more than one title. Lewis has transcribed Bale's catalogue, noticing the pieces he was acquainted with, and adding others which increased the list to near three hundred. The catalogue given by Baber is more correct; it is drawn up with much care from a personal examination of many of the works of Wickliff, and contains about one hundred and eighty articles.

But the list of Wickliff's writings most useful to the general reader, has been compiled by Vaughan, who with much personal labour examined the writings of the reformer yet in existence, and made himself better acquainted with their contents than any other person appears to have done during the last four centuries. It is not difficult to ascertain that the principal works attributed to Wickliff are his genuine productions. Many are expressly mentioned in public documents intended to suppress his opinions, while others possess sufficient internal evidence.

Printing had not then been discovered, copies could only be increased by the slow process of writing, while his enemies were indefatigable in their endeavours to destroy them, yet the copies were so numerous and so much valued, that nearly the whole of his writings are still extant—a sufficient proof, if any were wanting, that the doctrines he taught were widely diffused and highly valued. Nor was this confined to England; copies are also found in public libraries on the continent, and Subinco Lepus, bishop of Prague, burned more than two hundred volumes, many of which were richly adorned, the property of

persons of the higher classes in Bohemia. It also appears that the greater part of the writings of Wickliff that have not come down to us, treated of philosophical or scholastic subjects, which would be little prized except by the students of that period, while the copies of Wickliff's writings which remain, seem to have been preserved by the laity. Many of these are large volumes which could not have been written without much labour and cost. We may suppose they were prepared under the direction of some of his powerful supporters, while their plain appearance, contrasted with that of many of the highly adorned volumes written at that period, shows that the contents formed the chief value in the estimation of their possessors, nor do they seem to have been the workmanship of the religious establishments of that day. In one of Wickliff's homilies, he complains of the endeavours of the clergy to prevent the circulation of the English scriptures, and adds, "But one comfort is of knights, that they savour (esteem) much the gospel, and have will to read in English the gospel of Christ's life." Another, and even more interesting class of the Wickliff manuscripts, are the little books written with much less elegance, but which evidently were designed for the solace and instruction of souls, thirsting in secret for the waters of life. The tattered and well used appearance of many of these little volumes, is an indisputable testimony to the correctness of the allegations in the bishop's registers of the next two centuries, as to the manner in which these "pestilent books" were read by the followers of the truth, till, by the invention of printing, copious supplies of other religious tracts were brought forward.

Wickliff's principal work, the translation of the scriptures, has been already noticed. Copies of the whole or of detached portions are found in several public, and in some private libraries. A very beautiful and perfect specimen is preserved in the royal library in the British Museum, (Bib. Reg. I. c. viii.) The new testament has been printed, in 1731 and 1810, but being a literal reprint, in the original orthography, it is only calculated for libraries. Specimens of this version will be found at p. 45. As a work for popular use, Wickliff's translation now is of course wholly superseded by later versions.*

The Trialogus is the work next in importance. It contains a series of dialogues between three persons, characterised as Alethia or Truth, Pseudis or Falsehood, and Phronesis or Wisdom. Truth represents a sound divine and states questions, Falsehood urges the objections of an unbeliever, Wisdom decides as a subtle theologian. This work probably contains the substance of Wickliff's divinity lectures, with considerable additions. It embraces almost every doctrine connected with the theology of that day, treated however in the scholastic form then universal. Although very unattractive to modern readers,

* A prospectus for the printing of Wickliff's version of the old testament has lately been issued.

it was then doubtless a useful and important work. As Turner observes, "It was the respected academician, reasoning with the ideas of the reformer." It is evident that Wickliff wrote this work under a decided impression that his efforts for the truth were likely to be crowned with martyrdom. It was printed in 1524. Copies are rare, for this work was actively sought for by the Romanists, and destroyed. A specimen will be found in a subsequent page. The following remark of Baber is but too applicable to the method in which this work is written. "The scholastic theology which was taught at this period was a species of divinity which obscured the excellence and perverted the utility of that sacred science. By the introduction of this jargon of the schoolmen, philosophical abstraction and subtilty had superseded that unaffected simplicity and engaging plainness, with which the primitive teachers of christianity explained the doctrines of salvation." Thus, although Wickliff in the Trialogus vanquished the opponents of the truth with their own weapons, it was not calculated to be a work of general utility like his more popular tracts in the English language. A good summary of the contents of the Trialogus is given by Vaughan.

Only one other of Wickliff's writings appears to have been printed at the period of the reformation—his Wicket, a small treatise on the Lord's supper, which will be found in the present collection. This was among the most influential of his writings, as appears from the frequent mention of it in those records of persecution, the bishops' registers.

His treatise Of the Truth of Scripture is a very valuable performance. It is in Latin, only two manuscript copies are known to exist; one in the Bodleian library at Oxford, the other at Trinity College, Dublin. The latter is the preferable copy, and is described as containing two hundred and forty-four large double columned pages, of nearly a thousand words in a page. It would therefore be equal in contents to a common octavo of more than seven hundred pages. It abounds in contractions, but is fairly and legibly written. Fox the martyrologist possessed a copy which he intended to translate and print. Vaughan describes this work as embodying almost every sentiment peculiar to the reformer. James made considerable use of its contents in his apology for Wickliff, but it was neglected by Lewis. An accurate reprint, with a translation, would be exceedingly valuable. The extent of this piece wholly precluded insertion in the present collection, even in an abridged form.

Another useful and popular work in its day, was the Poor Caitiff. This is a collection of English tracts, which were widely circulated. Several copies of the whole, or of detached portions are in existence, but only a few sentences from its pages have hitherto been printed. This neglect has probably arisen from the little reference it contains to the controversies in which Wickliff was constantly engaged, and to which perhaps an undue prominence has been given by Lewis, and other early

biographers. This valuable memorial of the reformation will be found in the present volume.

Many of Wickliff's homilies or postills have been preserved; they appear rather to have been written down by his hearers, than to be finished copies prepared by himself. (See p. 24.)

Wickliff's other writings need not here be mentioned minutely. His Memorial to the King and Parliament, and Objections of Friars, were printed by James. Some of his small tracts have been printed by Lewis and Vaughan, to whose lists of the reformer's writings, particularly the latter, the reader may be referred.*

Most of these smaller pieces are in the British Museum, in the libraries of Trinity college, Dublin, and Trinity college, Cambridge. In the library of Corpus Christi college in the latter university, among the valuable collection of manuscripts the gift of archbishop Parker, is a volume containing many of the controversial pieces. The following note is prefixed. "In this book are gathered together all the sharp treatises concerning the errors and defaults which John Wickliff did find in his time, specially in the clergy and religious, and in other estates of the world."†

At the period when Wickliff wrote, the English language had begun to recover from the disuse into which it had fallen; from the time of the conquest many French and other foreign words and phrases were introduced by the higher ranks, who chiefly used the French language, but the lower orders adhered more closely to the Saxon phraseology. Mr. Baber observes, "Those of the works of Wickliff, written by him in his vernacular tongue, will be perused with interest and admiration by every one curious in the history of the English language, for Wickliff's English will, I apprehend, be found upon strict examination to be more pure than that of contemporary writers. Wickliff, when he wrote in his native tongue, did it not for the benefit of courtiers and scholars, but for the instruction of the less learned portion of the people. He therefore, as much as possible, rejected all 'strange English,' and was studious to express himself in a diction simple and unadorned; at the same time avoiding the charge of a barbarous and familiar phraseology." The use of English instead of barbarous Latin, in so large a portion of his writings, gave much efficacy to his exertions for the spiritual welfare of his countrymen.

A specimen of Wickliff's writings in their original orthography, will be found in two extracts from his version of the old testament in the following pages. At first they will appear hardly intelligible to the reader unaccustomed to the writings of that day. But on closer examination, it will be found that if

* One of his tracts, Why poor priests have no benefices, is printed in the History of the Church of Christ, vol. iv.

† Dr. Lamb, the master of Corpus Christi college, Cambridge, has very kindly permitted several of those pieces to be transcribed for the present selection by a friend.

the Saxon terminations, expletives, and peculiar words are removed, the language is, as it has been well characterised, "undefiled English;" in fact, very similar to the language of our rural districts at the present day. To have printed Wickliff's tracts in the precise form in which they were written, would have rendered them useless for the purposes of the present collection. It was therefore necessary to remove the peculiarities just adverted to, but farther the editor had no wish to proceed; and he felt the necessity of retaining the precise words of the original, wherever they would convey the meaning of the reformer to the general reader. How far the attempt has been successful, it is for those to say who may compare the present edition with the original manuscripts; he will only add that it was not an easy task, from the labour and the responsibility incurred.

The pieces included in this volume, which have not hitherto been printed, were copied from the originals expressly for the present collection. Many others were selected for the same purpose, but the limits of the work prevented their insertion.*

It is deeply to be regretted, that a complete edition of Wickliff's writings never has been printed. Such a monument is due to the illustrious individual to whom we perhaps are indebted more than to any other, for the gospel light and religious liberty we enjoy. Milton says, "A good book is the precious life blood of a master spirit, imbalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." Surely the writings of Wickliff ought not to be suffered to perish. A much smaller sum than in many instances has been vainly expended in monumental attempts to preserve the remembrance of persons whose names in a few short years have been almost entirely forgotten, would suffice to complete a national memorial record of our great reformer, "more lasting than brass." But, blessed be the Most High, when we look around, in every circumstance which endears to us the protestant faith of our land, we are reminded of JOHN WICKLIFF.

To use the words of Henry Wharton, "Wickliff was a man than whom the christian world in these last ages has not produced a greater; and who seems to have been placed as much above praise as he is above envy."

Doctrines taught by Wickliff.

The doctrines taught by Wickliff have been continually misrepresented by papists, and often misunderstood by protestants. They may be stated as follows.

Wickliff's FAITH was derived from the scriptures. He considered them as a divine revelation, containing a sufficient and

* The result of this examination enables the writer of these remarks to bear testimony to the value of Mr. Vaughan's account of the writings of Wickliff. He would again acknowledge that the present compilation has been much facilitated by the work of Mr. V. as well as by his pointing out some of the pieces which proved most suitable for insertion.

perfect rule of christian belief and practice. The authority of scripture he esteemed to be superior to any other writing, or to any tradition. He considered the canonical books alone as inspired. He urged that all truth is contained in scripture, and that no conclusion was to be allowed which was not sanctioned by the sacred records.

The pope's authority, or right to interfere in temporal concerns, he wholly rejected, and considered that it was only to be admitted in other respects, when conformable to scripture. He maintained that the pope might err in doctrine as well as in life.

The church of Christ he considered to be the universal congregation of those predestinated to life eternal. The church of Rome he considered not to be superior in authority to any other. He did not allow that the pope was head of the church, and opposed the extravagant authority claimed by the hierarchy, considering it as antichrist, whether usurped by the pope or the clergy at large, while he strongly urged the respect due to consistent and holy ministers of the word. He urged that the clergy ought not to be accounted lords over God's heritage, but as ministers and stewards of their heavenly master.

He supported the king's supremacy over all persons, even ecclesiastics, in temporal matters. He never taught any doctrine contrary to the legal rights of property.

He sometimes mentions the sacraments as seven, but only lays stress upon two, baptism and the Lord's supper. Of the others he spoke so lightly, as to be accused by his enemies of rejecting them. His opinion of the Lord's supper is stated in his Wicket and his confession. The doctrine of transubstantiation he wholly rejected.

He approved outward worship, and public assembling for that purpose, but condemned the superstitious rites of the Romish church. He disapproved the church music then esteemed, which was elaborate, often trifling, and opposed to devotional feeling.

He admitted the doctrine of purgatory—that early error, but rejected the most corrupt and profitable part of the fable, that the sufferings of purgatory may be shortened by the prayers of men or the intercessions of saints. According to his statements, it was rather the doctrine of an intermediate state, than the popish purgatory, which he condemns as "pious falsehood." As he advanced in life, his views on this subject became more clear and scriptural. (See extract from Dr. James, p. 109.) In Wickliff's tract Of the church of Christ, her members, and her governance, he says, "The second part of the church are saints in purgatory, and these sin not anew, but purge their old sins; and many errors are fallen in praying for these saints. And since they all are dead in body, Christ's words may be taken of them, Let us follow Christ in our life, and let the dead bury the dead." This widely differs from the doctrine of the church of Rome, thus determined by the council of Trent; "The souls detained in purgatory are assisted by the suffrages (prayers) of the faithful, and most especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar."

He allowed the memory of the saints to be honoured, but only that men might be excited to imitate their example, not as objects of worship. He denied the efficacy of their mediation, asserting that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Mediator. Pilgrimages he wholly disapproved, and the worship of images he frequently condemns.

The doctrines of papal indulgences and pardons he condemned in the strongest terms, as encouragements to sin. He also objected to sanctuaries, as affording impunity to crime. He held that absolution or forgiveness of sins belonged to God only.

He condemned the celibacy imposed by the church of Rome upon its clergy.

He is accused of wishing to deprive the church of its property, by what he has said upon the subject of tythes. His views were simply these. It is reasonable that the priest should have a suitable provision, besides the mere necessaries of food and raiment. He allowed that dymes (or tythes) and offerings are God's part, and that priests should live on them, but he urges "that the principal cause for which tythes and offerings should be paid, was curates teaching their parishioners in word and examples." When, however, the curates were wicked, and neglected their duty, he considered that the tythes might be withheld from them, though they ought to be devoted to the service of God. It should not be forgotten, that the priesthood then taught that men should have the divine blessing in this life, and heaven hereafter, if they duly paid their tythes and offerings. The reader who wishes to have a fuller account of Wickliff's opinions upon this subject may be referred to his biographers.*

He condemned the blasphemous expressions then so common; this has occasioned his being misrepresented as asserting that judicial oaths were unlawful, whereas he expressly declares that it is lawful to make oath by God Almighty in a needful case.

Of the election of grace he thus speaks in his Trialogus. "We are predestinated that we may obtain divine acceptance, and become holy; having received that grace through Christ's taking human nature, whereby we are rendered finally pleasing to God. And it appears that this grace, which is called the grace of predestination, or the charity of final perseverance, cannot by any means fail."

On the great doctrines of Justification and Merits, Dr. James quotes passages, which prove Wickliff to have taught "That faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, is sufficient for salvation, and that without faith it is impossible to please God; that the merit of Christ is able, by itself, to redeem all mankind from hell, and that this sufficiency is to be understood without any other cause concurring; he persuaded men therefore to trust wholly to Christ,

* The reader would also do well to examine the disputations of Huss upon this subject in the university of Prague. (See Fox.) What was said of Luther by Erasmus, may also be applied to Wickliff as the great cause of the vehement opposition he experienced. "He touched the pope on the crown, and the monks on the belly." The English reformer perhaps went farther than the German in the latter respect.

to rely altogether upon his sufferings, not to seek to be justified but by his righteousness, and that by participation in his righteousness, all men are righteous." Dr. James adds, "In the doctrine of merits, Wickliff was neither pelagian nor papist; he beateth down all these proud pharisees, who say that God did not all for them, but think that their merits help. He says, "Heal us, Lord, for nought; that is, no merit of ours; but for thy mercy, Lord, not to our merits, but to thy mercy, give thy joy. Give us grace to know that all thy gifts are of thy goodness. Our flesh, though it seem holy, yet it is not holy. We all are originally sinners, as Adam, and in Adam; his leprosy cleaveth faster to us than Naaman's did to Gehazi. For according to his teaching, we all are sinners, not only from our birth, but before, so that we cannot so much as think a good thought unless Jesus the Angel of great counsel send it; nor perform a good work unless it be properly his good work. His mercy comes before us that we receive grace, and followeth us, helping us, and keeping us in grace. So then it is not good for us to trust in our merits, in our virtues, in our righteousness, but to conclude this point, good it is only to trust in God."

The foregoing summary of doctrines taught by Wickliff, is taken from the statements of Baber, Vaughan, James, and Lewis, who have quoted passages confirmatory of every point. To their works the reader must be referred for those references; the limits of these pages do not allow them to be inserted in any form which could be useful. The reader should also again be reminded that he must not expect to find all these opinions so clearly set forth in every part of Wickliff's writings. Dr. James, speaking of the countenance some passages give to prayer to saints and the virgin, observes, "I am persuaded that he retracted these opinions in his latter and more learned works. If ever it be God's pleasure that his works, which were cut and mangled, and scattered worse than Absyrtus' limbs were in the poet, may be brought forth and set together again, that we may have the whole body of his learned and religious works, and be able to distinguish the time and order wherein he wrote, then, I say, we should receive due satisfaction on this point." Vaughan has done much to settle the dates of Wickliff's writings, and has thereby shown his gradual and satisfactory progress on several points.

We must not expect to find in his writings a finished system of doctrine. Many of his statements taken separately perhaps will appear incorrect, but take them as a *whole* and we shall be convinced that he well merited his glorious title, "The gospel doctor." For the variations which exist, as Dr. James observes, "Considering the times wherein, and the persons with whom he lived, he may easily obtain pardon of any impartial reader." As H. Wharton justly observes, these variations do not detract from him; they show that his opposition to Romish errors was directed by a matured judgment, and that he should not detect them all at once cannot be matter of surprise.

Vaughan also has ably cleared the reformer from the charge of inconsistency, or wavering; he has "fairly vindicated Wycliffe from the long reiterated accusation of having concealed his opinions to escape the terrors of power."

Upon the great and leading doctrine of the christian faith, Vaughan well observes, that Melancthon could have known but little of Wickliff's theological productions when he described him as "ignorant of the righteousness of faith." He adds, "If by that doctrine Melancthon meant a reliance on the atonement of Christ, as the only, and the certain medium for the guilty, it is unquestionable that this truth was the favourite, and the most efficient article in the faith of the English, as well as in that of the German reformer. It must be acknowledged that this tenet is more frequently adverted to in the writings of Luther, than in those of Wycliffe; and his notices respecting it, are also frequently more definite, because distinguishing more commonly between the acceptance of offenders in virtue of the Saviour's death, and the growth of devout affections in the heart, under the influence of the divine Spirit. But that such was the design of the Redeemer's sacrifice, was not more distinctly apprehended by the professor of Wittemberg, than by the rector of Lutterworth; nor was this truth the source of a more permanent confidence with the one than with the other."

In the history of the reformation, there are perhaps no two characters more nearly allied than Wickliff and Luther. Both looked to the holy scriptures as the standard of truth; for human instruction each learned much from the writings of Augustine. The boldness of the German professor was perhaps manifested at an earlier period of life, and the situation in which he was placed more favourable to the permanency of the work wherein he was called to labour; but Wickliff's sun shone brightest when setting, and the decided manner in which he rejected the errors of popery respecting the sacrament, while Luther never was wholly freed from their fatal influence, directed the efforts of his followers with undivided attention against the church of Rome. Thus when the doctrines of the gospel, as taught by the German reformers, were made known in England, the soil was found well prepared. Many among the lower and middle classes were informed on these points, and already had received the truth. The bishops' registers sufficiently prove the extent of Wickliff's labours. The records of bishop Longland's persecutions in 1521, (see Fox) show their effect was not evanescent.

This sketch of the life of Wickliff may be closed with "The public testimony given by the university of Oxford, touching the commendation of his great learning and good life."

"Unto all and singular the children of our holy mother the church, to whom this present letter shall come, the vice-chancellor of the university of Oxford, with the whole congregation of the masters, wish perpetual health in the Lord. Forsomuch as it is not commonly seen, that the acts and monuments of valiant

men, nor the praise and merits of good men should be passed over and hidden with perpetual silence, but that true report and fame should continually spread abroad the same in strange and far distant places, both for the witness of the same, and example of others—forsomuch also as the provident discretion of man's nature being recompensed with cruelty, hath devised and ordained this buckler and defence against such as do blaspheme and slander other men's doings, that whensoever witness by word of mouth cannot be present, the pen by writing may supply the same.—

"Hereupon it followeth, that the special good will and care which we bare unto John Wickliff, sometime child of this our university, and professor of divinity, moving and stirring our minds, as his manners and conditions required no less, with one mind, voice, and testimony, we do witness, all his conditions and doings throughout his whole life to have been most sincere and commendable; whose honest manners and conditions, profoundness of learning, and most redolent renown and fame, we desire the more earnestly to be notified and known unto all faithful, for that we understand the maturity and ripeness of his conversation, his diligent labours and travels to tend to the praise of God, the help and safeguard of others, and the profit of the church.

"Wherefore, we signify unto you by these presents, that his conversation, even from his youth upward, unto the time of his death, was so praiseworthy and honest, that never at any time was there any note or spot of suspicion noised of him. But in his answering, reading, preaching, and determining, he behaved himself laudably, and as a stout and valiant champion of the faith; vanquishing, by the force of the scriptures, all such, who by their wilful beggary blasphemed and slandered Christ's religion. Neither was this doctor convict of any heresy, either burned of our prelates after his burial. God forbid that our prelates should have condemned a man of such honesty, for a heretic; who, amongst all the rest of the university, hath written in logic, philosophy, divinity, morality, and the speculative art without equal. The knowledge of all which and singular things we do desire to testify and deliver forth; to the intent that the fame and renown of this said doctor may be the more evident, and had in reputation, amongst them unto whose hands these present letters testimonial shall come.

"In witness whereof, we have caused these our letters testimonial to be sealed with our common seal. Dated at Oxford, in our congregation-house, October 1st, 1406."*

* The Romanists, as might be expected, according to their usual practice, have endeavoured to represent this testimony as a forgery. Lewis has fully examined the subject, and has shown there is no reason to doubt that it was the recorded opinion of a considerable part at least of the members of the university. The public brand of heresy was not affixed to Wickliff's character till his bones were burned in 1428.

SPECIMENS

OF

WICKLIFF'S TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

Wickliff's translation of the holy scriptures has been noticed in the preceding pages. The reader is here presented with three specimens, strictly conformable to the original words and spelling, which will sufficiently manifest the impossibility of presenting a literal transcript of the reformer's writings so as to be useful, or even intelligible to general English readers of the present day.

The 22d Psalm, and the 4th chapter of Malachi are copied from the beautiful MS. of Wickliff's Bible in the British Museum, already mentioned. The 1 John i. is transcribed from the Rev. H. Baber's reprint of Lewis's edition of Wickliff's New Testament.

PSALM XXII.

'þe title of þe xxii. salm, þe salm eẏ þe song of dauid.

The lord gouerneþ me. ȝ no þing schal fail to me: in þe place of pasture ẏe he haþ set me. He nurschide me on þe watir of refreischẏng: he conuertide my soule. He ledde me forþ on þe paþis of riztfulnesse: for his name. For whit þouz ẏ schal go in þe mẏddis of schadewe of deeþ: ẏ schal not drede ẏuels. for þou art wiþ me. þi zerde and þi staf: þo han coũfortid me. þou hast maad redi aboord in mẏ sizt: azens hem þat troblen me. þou hast maad fat mẏn heed wiþ oẏle: and mẏ cuppe þat filleþ me is ful cleer. And þi merci schal sue me: in alle þe daies of mẏ lẏf. And þt ẏ dwelle in þe hows of þe lord: in to þe lengþe of daies.

MALACHI IV.

The last chapter of the old testament.

For lo a dai schal come: brēnẏnge as a chẏmenei, ȝ alle proude men. and alle doẏnge unpitee: schulen be stobul, and þe dai comẏnge schal enflaume hem seiþ þe lord of oostis: which schal not leeue to hē rote ȝ buriownẏng, ȝ to zou dredẏnge mẏ name. þe sũne of riztwisnesse schal rise: and heelþe in pēnẏs of hẏm, ȝ ze schulen go out: ȝ schulen skippe as a calf of þe droue, and ze schulē to trede unpitouse men: whāne þei schulen be aische undur þe soole of zoure feet. in þe dai ī which ẏ do seiþ þe lord of oostis, biþenke ze on þe lawe of mẏ seruāũt moises: which ẏ comāũdide to hẏm in oreb. to al isrl' comaũdemētis ȝ domes, lo ẏ schal sende to zou elie þe pfete: bifore þt þe greet dai ȝ orible of ye lord come, ȝ he schal conu'te þe herte of fad's to sones: ȝ þe herte of sones to fad's of hem. lest pauēture ẏ come ȝ smẏte þe erþe wiþ curs,

1 JON.—Cap. I.

That thing that was fro the bigynnyng, which we herden, which we sigen with oure igen, which we biheelden and oure hondis touchiden of the word of liif. and the liif is schewid, and we saigen, and we witnessen and tellen to you euerlesting liif that was anentis the fadir and apperide to us. therefore we tellen to you that thing that we sigen and herden, that also ye haue felowschip with us and oure felowschip be with the fadir and with his sone iesu crist. and we writen this thing to you, that ye haue ioie, and that youre ioie be ful. and this is the tellyng that we herden of him and tellen to you, that god is ligt and ther ben no derknessis in hym. if we seien that we hau felowschip with him, and we wandren in derknessis, we lien and doen not treuthe. but if we walken in ligt as also he is in ligt we hau felowschip togidre, and the blood of iesu crist his sone clenseth us fro al synne, if we seien that we hau no synne we disseyuen ussilff, and treuthe is not in us. if we knowlechen oure synnes, he is feithful and iust that he forgyve to us oure synnes, and clense us fro al wickidnesse. and if we seien that we hau not synned, we maken him a lier, and his word is not in us.

Wickliff's confession respecting the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. See p. 32.

We believe, as Christ and his apostles have taught us, that the sacrament of the altar, white and round, and like to our bread or host unsacred, is very God's body in form of bread, and if it be broken in three parts as the church uses, or else in a thousand, every one of these parts is the same God's body. And right so as the person of Christ is very God and very man, very Godhead, and very manhead, right so as holy church many hundred winters has trowed,* the same sacrament is very God's body, and very bread; as it is form of God's body and form of bread, as Christ and his apostles teach. And therefore St. Paul never nameth it, but when he calls it bread, and he, by our belief, took his knowledge of God in this: and the argument of heretics against this sentence, it is easy for a christian man to assolve.† And right as it is heresy to believe that Christ is a spirit, and no body; so it is heresy to trow that this sacrament is God's body, and no bread; for it is both together. But the most heresy that God suffered to come to his church, is to trow that this sacrament is an accident without a substance, and may on no wise be God's body; for Christ said, by witness of John, that "this bread is my body." And if they say, that by this skill‡ holy church hath been in heresy many hundred winters, sooth§ it is, specially since the fiend was loosed, that was by witness of

* Believed. † Refute. ‡ Interpretation. § Truth.

angel to John evangelist, after a thousand winters that Christ was stenenyde* to heaven. But it is to be supposed that many saints that died in the mean time, before their death were pured of this error. How great diversity is between us that trow that this sacrament is very bread in its kind, and between heretics that tell us it is an accident without a subject. For before that the fiend, the father of leasing,† was loosed, this gabbing‡ was never contrived. And how great diversity is between us that trow that this sacrament is very bread in its kind, and sacramentally God's body, and between heretics that trow and tell us that this sacrament may on no wise be God's body. For I dare surely say, that if this were sooth, Christ and his saints died heretics, and the more part of holy church now believeth heresy, and before devout men suppose that this council of friars in London, was with the herydene.§ For they put a heresy upon Christ and saints in heaven, wherefore the earth trembled. Fay‖ land man's voice answered for God, also it did in time of his passion, when he was condemned to bodily death. Christ and his mother, that in ground hath destroyed all heresies, keep his church in right belief of this sacrament, and move the king and his realm to ask sharply of his clerks this office, that all his possessioners,¶ on pain of losing all their temporalities, tell the king and his realm, with sufficient grounding, what is this sacrament. And all the orders of friars, on pain of their allegiance, tell the king and his realm, with good grounding, what is the sacrament. For I am certain of the third part of the clergy that defend these doubts** that is here said, that they will defend it on pain of their lives."

Lewis observes on this confession, " One would wonder that this paper should ever be reckoned a retractation of Dr. Wiclif's, by any that had seen and read it, since he so openly maintains in it his opinion of the sacrament, declares his resolution to defend it with his blood, and censures the contrary as heresy. It seems that it was not so understood by Dr. Wiclif's judges; for very soon after, he was, by the king's authority, expelled the university." Walsingham admits that it was rather a reassertion than a retractation of Wickliff's doctrines relative to the sacrament.

* Ascended. From various passages in Wickliff's writings, it appears that he and others supposed that Satan had been bound during the first thousand years of the christian era, but that he was loosed afterwards. This presents a painful idea of the extent to which the profligacy and persecutions of the Romish church had then proceeded.

† Lies. ‡ Idle prating. § Earthquake, see p. 29.

‖ In truth. ¶ Ecclesiastics allowed to hold lands. ** Disputes.

Dr. Wickliff's letter of excuse to Pope Urban VI.

(See p. 32.)

I have joyfully to tell all true men the belief that I hold, and always to the pope. For I suppose that if my faith be rightful and given of God, the pope will gladly conserve it, and if my faith be error, the pope will wisely amend it. I suppose over this, that the gospel of Christ be part of the body of God's law. For I believe that Jesu Christ, that gave in his own person this gospel, is very God and very Man, and by this it passes all other laws. I suppose over this, that the pope be most obliged to the keeping of the gospel among all men that live here. For the pope is the highest vicar that Christ has here in earth. For greatness of Christ's vicars is not measured by worldly greatness, but by this, that this vicar follows more Christ by virtuous living, for thus teaches the gospel. That this is the sentence of Christ and of his gospel, I take as belief, that Christ for time that he walked here was most poor man of all, both in spirit and in possessions, for Christ says that he had nought for to rest his head on. And over this, I take as belief that no man should follow the pope, nor no saint that is now in heaven, but inasmuch as he followed Christ, for James and John erred, and Peter and Paul sinned. Of this I take as wholesome counsel, that the pope leave his worldly lordship to worldly lords, as Christ gave him, and move speedily all his clerks to do so, for thus did Christ, and taught thus his disciples, till the fiend had blinded this world. And if I err in this sentence, I will meekly be amended, if by the death, if it be skilful for that I hope were good to me. And if I might travel in my own person, I would with God's will go to the pope. But Christ has needed me to the contrary, and taught me more obedience to God than to man. And I suppose of our pope, that he will not be antichrist and reverse Christ in this working to the contrary of Christ's will. For if he summons against reason, by him or any of his, and pursue this unskilful summoning, he is an open antichrist. And merciful intent excused not Peter, that Christ called him Satan; so blind intent and wicked counsel excuses not the pope here, if he ask of true priests that they travel more than they may, it is not excused by reason of God that he is not antichrist. For our belief teaches us, that our blessed God suffers us not to be tempted more than we may, how should a man ask such service? And therefore pray we to God for our pope Urban VI., that his holy intent be not quenched by his enemies. And Christ that may not lie, says, that the enemies of a man are especially his own family, and this is truth of men and fiends.

THE

POOR CAITIFF.*

BY

JOHN WICKLIFF, D.D.

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* The word caitiff signifies a captive, or a man in a wretched state. The Rev. H. Baber says, "Pauper Rusticus; Confessio derelicti Pauperis; and the Pore Caitif, are various titles of the same book, which may with propriety be called, The Poor Man's Library. It is a volume of small tracts, written in English, for the purpose of instructing the lower orders of the community in the most useful precepts of the christian religion."

There are several copies of this work in existence in the British Museum and other public libraries. It appears to have been widely circulated, although the invention of printing was not then known. The present attempt is the first that has been made to give any portion of it to the public, excepting a few detached sentences. The whole is here given except that the object and limits of the present work rendered some compression necessary. Several quotations from the fathers, occasional repetitions, and some other passages, have therefore been omitted.

The tracts contained in this collection are, Of the Belief;—On the Ten Commandments;—On the Lord's Prayer;—Of Perfect Life, or the Counsel of Christ;—Of Temptation, or, of Virtuous Patience;—The Charter of our Heavenly Heritage;—The Armour of Heaven, or, Of Ghostly Battle;—To Love Jesus;—Of the Love of Jesus;—Of Meekness;—Of Man's Will;—Of Active Life and Contemplative Life. There is another piece, On Chastity, which is omitted; it contains several Romish legends, and is not suitable for the present collection.

THE PROLOGUE.

This treatise, compiled of a poor caitiff needing the spiritual help of all christian people, by the great mercy and help of God, shall teach simple men and women of good will, the right way to heaven, without multiplication of many books, if they will busy themselves to have it in mind, and work thereafter. And as a child desiring to be a learned man, begins first at the ground, that is, at his A, B, C; so he thus desiring to speed, begins at the ground of health,* that is, christian man's belief; for without belief,† it is impossible, as St. Paul saith, that any man please God. But as belief by itself is not sufficient to men's salvation, without good works, as Christ saith by his apostle St. James.‡ he proposes with God's help, to speak upon each of the commandments of God, in which are contained charitable works,§ that belong to belief. And since it is hard to obtain aught of God in prayer till the man truly believes, and lives after his commands, as he saith in the gospel, Whereto say ye to me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say? Therefore after going through the commandments, he thinks, with the help and mercy of God, to show forth the prayer that Christ Jesus taught his disciples, that is, the paternoster; and after these, some short sentences exciting men to heavenly desire; for thus it behoves to climb, as by a ladder of divers steps, from the ground of belief, into the keeping of God's commands; and so up from virtue to virtue till he see the God of Zion, reigning in everlasting bliss. Which may he grant to us, who liveth and reigneth, without end, merciful God. Amen.

* Salvation.

† Faith.

‡ James ii. 17—20. From the pages that follow, the reader will find that Wickliff had no intention to teach that justification cometh by works, but to show the inseparable connection of faith and works, the latter being the fruits and evidences of the former, and a proof that it is not mere empty credence like that of devils, James ii. 19.

§ The works of charity or love.

THE

POOR CAITIFF.

ON THE BELIEF.

The ground of all goodness is stedfast faith, or belief. This, through grace and mercy, is obtained of God. Faith was the principal ground that enabled the woman of Canaan to obtain health of soul and of body of Christ, for her daughter, who was evil treated of a devil, as the gospel witnesseth. And the centurion was much praised of Christ for the stedfast belief that he had in the power of his Godhead. Faith is likened to the loadstar,* for it showeth the haven of grace to men rowing in the sea of this world. Faith is the eastern star that leads spiritual kings† to worship Jesus Christ, through withstanding of sin, as the east star led three kings when Christ was born. Faith or belief is as a stone lying in the foundation of a strong building, that beareth up all the work. For as the building standeth stiffly that is well grounded upon a stone, so each virtuous deed is strong when it is grounded upon the solidity of belief. For upon this stone, that is, solid faith, Christ said that he would build his church, that is, man's soul. A man that hath lost his right eye is unable to defend himself in battle, for his shield hides his left eye, and so he has no sight to defend himself from his enemy; even so he that has lost the right eye of true faith, is unable to withstand or fight against his spiritual enemy, the devil. Saints, as St. Paul saith, through stedfastness and true faith, overcame kingdoms, Heb. xi. They overcame the kingdom of their flesh through holiness of soul and body; and the kingdom of the world by setting at nought riches; and the kingdom of the fiend through patience and meekness.

The want of stedfast faith is the chief cause why men

* The pole star, by which mariners used to steer their course at night, before the invention of the compass.

† Rev. i. 6. v. 10.

fall into deadly sin. For if a man truly believed that soon after he committed a sin, he should lose one of his limbs, he would through that belief keep himself, and flee from that sin. How much more if he believed that God would punish him in body and soul for evermore, if he died in that sin? If man's belief and trust were firmly set in God, all fear of man, fantasies, and fear of this world, would grieve him but little, or not at all. Christ said to his disciples, that if their faith were as great as the seed of mustard, and they should say to this hill, Pass hence, it should pass; and nothing should be impossible to them. St. Jerome saith that faith is likened to the corn of seed. If the corn of seed be not broken, the virtue thereof is not known; but the more it is pounded, even the stronger it smelleth; even so a man who is firmly grounded in the faith, the more he is pounded by persecution, the greater and the more fervent is his belief. Thus if man's faith were as great as the mustard seed, he should remove from himself the hill of pride, and all other false deceits of the fiend.

This faith maketh our souls so able to receive heavenly gifts, that we may get whatever we desire of the faithful Lord. Oh, blessed is the soul that believeth right and liveth well, and in well living keepeth true faith. While Peter had true faith, he went upon the sea as upon dry land; but when the firmness of his faith failed, he began to sink, and therefore Christ reproved him as of little faith. Thus it fares with us, who are staggering and unstedfast with the wind of each temptation or fear. Therefore, brethren, let us set all our belief and full trust on Him who is almighty, and not in any vain thing that may fail in any time. Trust we stedfastly that nothing may grieve us farther than He will suffer it, and all things which he sendeth come for the best. And let no wealth of this failing world, neither tribulation, draw our hearts from firm belief in God. Let us not put our belief or trust in charms, or in dreams, or any other fantasies; but only in Almighty God. For it is full perilous, as holy doctors say, to scatter man's belief about any such. And let each man and woman take heed to themselves, for good living makes man to have firm belief and trust in God, and evil works draw him into despair, as John Chrysostom saith.

After the ascension of Christ, the Holy Ghost taught his apostles all truth needful to the soul; and by his teaching they twelve settled together twelve articles, which all that

will be saved must believe.* The first article of belief St. Peter put into the creed, saying, *I believe in God, Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.* To believe *to* God, is one thing; to believe *in* God, is another. The first both evil men and good men have; but the second none but good men have. The fiends believe to God, that is, that he is true, and that his words are truth: and yet some men and women fail of this point! For if they truly believed that the words of God are true, which he speaketh in holy writ, against their sinful living, they would amend their defaults, either for dread or for love. To believe in God, as St. Augustine saith, is, in belief to cleave to God through love, and to seek busily to fulfil his will; for no man truly believeth in God, but he that loveth God, and by his good living believeth to have bliss of God, as a great doctor saith. And no man sinneth against God but he fails in belief, which is the ground of all good works. As the same doctor saith, In that he is Father, he will mildly do mercy to men forsaking sin; and in that he is almighty, he is ready and of power to punish all those who will not leave their sin. We should believe that God the Father, being almighty, without beginning and ending, made heaven, earth, and all creatures, of nought, through his word.

St. Andrew said, *I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.* This article pertains to the Godhead of the Son, the second person in the Holy Trinity. We should believe that Jesus Christ the Son, is equal with the Father, without beginning and ending, equal in might, and all one in might, equal in goodness, and all one in goodness; and that the Son doeth nothing without the Father; and these two persons are one almighty God, without beginning and ending. Jesus Christ, God's Son, and in like manner mighty with God the Father, is said plainly to be our Lord by double right; for he bought us with his precious blood, and because he shall be our Judge, and pronounce our sentence.

* This account of the twelve apostles having united to compose the creed which goes by their name, is given by Ambrose, also by Ruffinus, and other ancient ecclesiastical historians. The ascribing of each article to a particular apostle, is mentioned in a sermon attributed to Augustine. The tradition has been justly questioned, and although this symbol of christian doctrine was of high antiquity in the primitive church, it received additions and alterations at different periods. See lord King's history of the Apostle's Creed, and bishop Pearson on the Creed. This legend, however, does not involve any erroneous doctrine.

St. James, the son of Zebedee, said, *I believe that he is conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary.* This is the first article belonging to the manhood of Christ. We should believe that Christ, the Son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, took flesh and blood truly of the virgin by the Holy Ghost, and came into this world, very God and man together.

St. John the evangelist said, *I believe that he suffered pain under Pontius Pilate, upon the cross, died and was buried.* Here we should believe that the same Jesus Christ, very God and man, in the same flesh that he took of the virgin Mary, endured hard pain and sufferings, and even bodily death, by the doom of Pilate, judge of that province, without impairing of his Godhead. Christ bodily suffered hard pain, for we should have sufferance or patience in our adversities and tribulations. He suffered meekly and never trespassed, for we should suffer willingly, who have much trespassed. Christ was crucified, for we should chastise our flesh by penance,* withstanding sins and unlawful lusts; Christ died on the cross bodily, that we should endure the cross of penance, withstanding sin to our lives' end.

The cross of penance hath four parts. The first is sorrow for losing the love of God; the second is sorrow for losing the joy of heaven; the third is sorrow for deserving the pain of hell; and the fourth is sorrow for serving to the fiend and sin. Christ was buried; let this remind us that we hide our good deeds from the favour and estimation of the world, and remember that the earth is naturally the inheritor of our mortal flesh, that our thoughts may be closed from the lusts of this world, stedfastly having in mind the dreadful pains and death of Christ.

St. Thomas of India said, *I believe that he went down to hell, and the third day he rose from death to life.* Here we should believe that Christ's body lay dead in the sepulchre, without the soul, till the third day; that he rose from death to life; but the Godhead departed not from the body, neither from the soul, and after that the soul was departed from the body, it went down to hell;† and delivered the holy

* Penance is often used to express repentance. It is evident the reformer here means true repentance, and not the bodily penances of the church of Rome, as he refers to mental operations.

† This interpretation of the words of the creed was held by Luther, Melancthon, and most of the reformers, British as well as foreign. It is hardly needful to add that a more general sense is now usually adopted in the protestant churches, considering it to refer to the

souls that were there, through virtue of the Godhead. Christ went down into hell, giving us an example that we go thither by inward thought while we live; having mind upon the bitter pains which are there, that we come not thither after this life. Also he rose the third day, in body and soul together, very God and very man, everlasting. He would not rise before the third day, to show the time that he was verily dead in body. For if he had risen quickly, it had not been believed that he was verily dead. And as each word of true witnessing is confirmed by the mouth of two or three, so that Christ was verily dead in the body, may be known by his lying in the tomb till the third day. On the third day he rose from death, in token that the light of his death had destroyed our double death, both of Adam and of ourselves; and that we should rise from spiritual death by three manner of medicines; by contrition or sorrow of heart, by confession, and satisfaction.

St. James, the son of Alpheus, said, *I believe that he ascended to heaven, and there sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father almighty.* Here we should believe that Jesus Christ, very God and very man, everlasting, appeared to his disciples after his rising from the dead, teaching them of the kingdom of heaven, and eating with them to show that he was very man as before his death, ascending into heaven raised mankind above all orders of angels. He ascended to open the gate of heaven, he ascended to show the way to men, and to lead man with him, he ascended to pray the Father for mankind.

St. Philip said, *I believe that he is to come, to doom the quick and dead.* Here we should believe that the same Jesus Christ, very God and very man, shall come to the judgment in the same manner, and with the same wounds that he suffered and bare with him to heaven, and shall doom all mankind, both good and evil, according to their deeds.

That shall be a dreadful doom, and a fearful doomsman. For Christ, who shall be Judge there, is now meek as a lamb, and ready to bow to mercy; but there he will be stern as a lion to all that are damnable, and doom according to righteousness. Before the stern Doomsman, beholding

unseen world, according to the correct derivation of the word used. The deliverance of the souls departed is founded on an erroneous interpretation of the text, 1 Peter iii. 19. one of the supports of the doctrine of purgatory, resorted to by the church of Rome.

all saints, angels, and fiends, as John Chrysostom saith, all men and women shall yield reckoning of all their living in earth; of all the deeds that they have done; for what intent and to whose worship they wrought them; and not only of great trespasses, but also of those that seem but small. For of each idle word man shall account there, as Christ saith himself. For as Isidore saith, "Each word that edifies not the hearer turns into peril to the speaker." That is an idle word, as Jerome saith, which profits not the speaker, neither the hearer. And since reckoning shall be holden of such, much more and without comparison, harder reckoning shall be of sinful speech, as of backbiting, slandering, scorning, false accusing, lying, swearing, cursing, and licentious speech. Also man shall yield reckoning of all the thoughts of his heart that inclined to any sin, as God saith by his prophet. And not only we shall account for deeds done, which we should not have done, but also of deeds left undone, that we should have done. As those that have not done works of mercy to poor needy folk, nor given to them, nor lent to them, nor helped them in their suffering, as Christ shall rehearse at the doom, as he himself saith.

Also of all the time that man hath in earth, he shall yield reckoning, how he has spent it, as it is written in the book of mourning.* And therefore saith Bernard, "All the time given to man, God shall seek how he hath spent it." And of misspending time, Anselm speaks, saying to man, "O thou unprofitable and dry tree, worthy everlasting fire, what shalt thou answer in that day when all the time given to thee shall be asked how thou hast spent it?" Also man shall account there of all his worldly goods, how he has gotten them, kept, spent, and lent them. As Christ meaneth by the spiritual understanding of the ten pieces of money and the five talents. Also of all powers of body, as strength, comeliness, swiftness, skill of body—in whose service these have been spent.

Also each man shall yield reckoning of the keeping of his own soul. For if a king had a daughter like to himself, to whom he thought to give great dignity and worship, and took her to any of his realm to keep; the more negligent that man were about her keeping, the stricter reckoning the king would ask of him for her. What then shall the King of heaven do to him to whom he hath committed a daughter most like to himself, that is to say, man's soul;

* Lamentations.

the much loved daughter of this King, and ordained to great honour in the bliss of heaven, if this man keep her recklessly? Therefore God commandeth in the book of his law, that each man carefully keep his own soul. The father and mother also shall account for their children whom they chastise not; as is expressed in holy writ, how Eli was punished for his sons, because he chastised them not, as he should have done. Also the prelate or the curate shall account for his subjects, how he taught them by living and by word; as God saith by his prophet, a great dread shall be at his doom.

Of the multitude of accusers, man's own conscience, which is defiled with sin and not amended, shall accuse him, not privily but openly. Also a man's own sins, which he would not leave, shall accuse him. As a stolen thing tied to a thief's neck, accuses him, so shall sins not amended in this life accuse sinful wretches. Also holy writ shall accuse them that knew it, and heard it, and lived not thereafter. Such shall bear with them the sentence of condemnation, as Uriah bare with him the sentence of his own death.* And in example hereof Christ said, that Moses' law shall accuse the Jews. Also God's creatures which a man has used out of measure and in sin, shall accuse him there, and be as ready to take vengeance upon him as they were before to serve him. The fiends also shall be ready there, accusing sinful men and women, for they, as traitors, enticed to the sin, and when the sin is done they will accuse man thereof. And therefore in the book of Revelation the fiend is called accuser of christian men. And as Augustine saith, then shall the adversary say, "Thou righteous Judge, doom these to be mine for sin which they have wrought, who would not be thine by grace. Thine they were by nature, for thou madest them of nought, but mine they are now, through sin and wretchedness, which they have wrought. Thine they were, for by thy passion thou hast bought them; mine they are now, for they did the sin that I put into their thought. To thee they were disobedient, to me they were obedient, and to my enticing. Of thee they took the garment of holiness, of me have they taken this coat of sin and filth. Thy garment they have lost, and with mine they have come hither. Righteous Judge, doom these to be mine, and to be damned with me." Alas! where shall that wretch abide who is so hard beset?

* 2 Sam. xi. 14.

Also the benefits which men have received of God, who did not worship him with due service for them, shall accuse them, and be alleged against them. And it is shown in holy writ where the angel came to the place of weeping,* (by which place is understood the doom, for there shall be weeping and wailing, as John saith in the book of Revelation.) And there he rehearsed the benefits which God hath done to the people, and reproved the people, for they had not them in mind, and worshipped him not for them. And the torment which Christ suffered in time of his passion, both wounds, cross, nails, and spear, shall accuse sinful men, as Bernard saith.

Therefore all christian people have stedfast minds upon this sentence, and flee the unlawful lusts of your flesh, and covetings, and deceits of this deceivable world; and believe ye and have ye stedfastly in mind, that Christ shall appear in the judgment, stern as a lion to wicked men's sight, and doom both quick and dead. Of the great dread of that day God speaks by the prophet Joel. The day of the Lord shall be a great day of deliverance, a day of wrath, and of vengeance, of misery, of bitterness; the day of complaining and of accusing, the day of dread and of trembling, the day of crying and of sorrow, the day of darkness and of mourning, the day of calamity and of bitterness; a dreadful day of parting from God for ever, as Anselm rehearses.

St. Bartholomew said, *I believe in the Holy Ghost.* Here we should believe that the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Holy Trinity, is very God, without beginning and ending, and equal in wisdom, might, and goodness, with the Father and the Son, and that these three persons of the Holy Trinity are one almighty God; and each one mighty, and all one might; and endless good, and all one goodness; and endless truth, and endless wisdom, and endless love, and endless righteous, and endless merciful; all are one truth, one wisdom, one beauty, one love, one righteousness, and one mercy.

St. Matthew said, *I believe in the holy church, and communing of saints.*† We should believe the communion

* Or Bochim, Judges ii.

† Wickliff then states that the holy church is divided into three parts. One, the church militant here on earth; another, the purgatory of souls abiding the great mercy of God; the third part is in heaven, Christ that is Head of all holy church, with his saints. It has been already observed that Wickliff had not fully renounced the error of purgatory, one of the earliest that crept into the church, and

of saints, that is, that each of the three parts of holy church takes part of the other's goodness, and helps the other. The part that is in heaven helps the other two parts, praying for them, as Bernard saith; and the other two parts are said to help them that are in heaven, when their bliss and joy is increased by the fellowship of the others. For the more there are, the more is their bliss, and thus each of these three parties communes with the other.

St. Simon said, *I believe forgiveness of sins.* Here we should believe that they who amend their life, doing true penance,* with leaving off sin and keeping God's commandments, and ending in love, shall have forgiveness of all their sins. And Christ, through his passion and death, got for us of his Father forgiveness of our sins.

St. Jude said, *I believe the rising of the body.* Here we should believe that all mankind shall rise at the day of doom, from death to life, in body and soul together, each in his own kind, and in his own body, incorruptible and immortal. And though the body were burned with fire, and the powder thereof thrown into the four seas that go about the world, yet the soul and it shall come together again, and rise from death to life, at the dreadful doom, and from that day forward never after depart. And they that have evil lived, and ended in deadly sin, shall go in body and soul to pain for evermore, and they that have lived well and kept the commands of God, and fulfilled the deeds of mercy after their power, and ended in charity to God and man, shall go, body and soul together, to bliss for evermore.

Of which bliss and life St. Matthias spake in the last article, where he saith, *And I believe in everlasting life.* In that everlasting life of joy and bliss, good men and women that ended well, shall dwell in body and soul, world without end.

THAT LIFE MAY HE TO US GRANT WHO BOUGHT US WITH HIS LIFE BLOOD. AMEN.

one of the most difficult to cast off. It is however sufficient to notice, that Wickliff admits this erroneous doctrine without the particulars by which the church of Rome made it the great support of its power. His own views also gradually advanced to more perfect knowledge of the truth, thus we find in this treatise the sacrament of the altar is mentioned in terms more accordant with the doctrines of the Romish church, than in Wickliff's Wicket, and other tracts upon that subject. See also the remarks on Wickliff's opinions in a preceding page.

* Repentance.

ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

THE PROLOGUE TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

A MAN asked Christ what he should do for to have the life that shall last for ever, and Christ said to him, If thou wilt enter into everlasting life, keep the commandments. By this answer of Christ, each man may understand that there is no other way to heaven, without keeping these commands, and therefore each man and woman who desires speedily to come to that life, which shall last for ever, let him do his business with all strength of body and soul to keep these commandments, and despise all sophistries and arguments of false flatterers and heretics, who both in work and word despise these commandments, and with false feigned arguments reply against simple men, saying that it is not lawful to be busy about the keeping of them; yea, and saying that it is needful sometimes to break them.* But as Jannes and Jambres, the philosophers of Pharaoh, withstood Moses, through their witchcraft, when he was about to deliver God's people out of the thraldom of Pharaoh, so these men, confused in understanding, withstand true teaching, through which God's people should be delivered out of the thraldom of the devil. But all their sophistries shall not serve them at the last; if they be not found keeping, and in full will keep, these commandments of God; for all other ceremonies, without keeping these commandments, are nothing worth, as St. Paul witnesses.†

Almighty God wrote ten commands in two tables of stone, in token that the hearts of his people were full hard to love

* The doctrines sanctioned by the church of Rome went to this extent. Aquinas taught that venial sins do not cause any stain in the soul. Cajetan asserted that to commit venial sin, even out of contempt, is not mortal sin. It is hardly necessary to add, that the holy scripture draws no such lines of distinction between sins as the church of Rome has done, refining until the breach of each commandment is treated as venial. For a variety of authorities from Romish writers on this subject, see a work entitled, *The Picture of Popery*. Lond. 1716. It may be added that Aquinas and others assert that the smallness of a thing in all cases excuses from mortal sin.

† This description of the Romish casuists whose authority was much regarded in that day is very just. The straight forward statements of Wickliff presented a striking contrast to their sophistries.

him, and gave them to Moses, his servant, to teach them to his people. And he promised that those who would be obedient and keep them, should have his blessing, and prosperity, and wealth, and they that would not, should have his curse, and great sorrow, and mischief, as it is expressed in the fifth book of holy writ.

Three,[four] commandments were written in the first table, and seven [six] in the other.* The three [four] first teach how men should love God, and the other seven [six] teach what man should do to his fellow christian, and what he shall not do. And these commandments are so hard knitted together, that he who loves God fully, loves his fellow-christians, and whosoever loves not them, he loves not God. For whoso loves not his neighbour whom he may see with his eyes, how may he love God whom he seeth not? as St. John saith.

THE FIRST (AND SECOND) COMMANDMENT.

The FIRST command, God commandeth in these words; saying, "I am thy Lord God, that led thee out of Egypt, out of the house of thraldom, and bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thee a graven image, neither any likeness which is in heaven above, and which is in earth beneath, nor of those things that are in waters under the earth. Thou shalt not pray to them, nor worship them in soul. I am thy Lord God, a strong jealous lover; visiting the wickedness of fathers on the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hated me; and doing mercy unto a thousand of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

Our Lord God said all these words, and they are charged with more wisdom than we can tell. As for the first clause, we shall understand that almighty God chose the children of Israel, who came of Isaac, Abraham's son, and of Jacob his son, before other nations, and said that they should be his people, and he would be their God. For to their forefather Abraham, and to his lineage, God promised to give the land of promise, by which is understood the land of bliss, that is, heaven.

* Wickliff follows the division of the commandments used by the church of Rome, and still retained in the Lutheran church; but he does not suppress the second commandment, as is often done in Romish catechisms and books of devotion.

And God suffered his people, for their sins, to be in great thraldom in the land of Egypt under king Pharaoh, and they cried to God oft, to bring them out of that mischief; and so he did at the last, for he had compassion upon them, and sent his servant Moses, and Aaron his brother, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he should deliver God's people, and he would not. But Moses, by teaching of God, wrought such wonders before Pharaoh, that at the last, by the might of God, he delivered God's people. And Moses led them over the Red Sea, as a dry way, the water standing upright on either side of them, in manner of two walls, and they went over dry. And soon after, Pharaoh, fervent in envy, gathered together his host, and pursued God's people into the Red Sea. And when they were entered, he and all his host, by the same way that the people went, God made the water to pass forth in its usual course, and drenched* Pharaoh and all his host; and God brought his people over, safe, into the desert. And for this wonderful work, and many more, they were commanded to worship him for their God, and no other.

And as God brought this people out of bodily thraldom, and the bondage of Pharaoh, so he brought us out of the spiritual thraldom, and bondage of the fiend. For before the time that Christ became man, all mankind were spiritually in Egypt, that is in the darkness of sin, and under the thraldom of Pharaoh, that is, under the power of the fiend. But Christ came down from heaven and became man, and did many wonders and marvels in the Egypt of this world, before the Pharaoh, that is, the fiend, king of this Egypt. And through his bloody passion† delivered his people out of thraldom, and drenched the fiend with all his host. For Christ, through his painful passion, overcame the power of the fiend, and left him bound in hell for a thousand years after, as St. John saith in the book of Revelation.‡ And thus God, through his great might and mercy, delivered his people out of the Egypt of hell, and out of the thraldom of the fiend.

Though a man had no more causes than this, methinks it should singularly move him to set all his trust, his worship, and his love, in God, who is thus full of might and

* Drowned. † Sufferings.

‡ It is hardly necessary to observe, that the views of Wickliff respecting the fulfilment of the prophecies, in many respects differ from those which are now generally entertained.

mercy. For there was no creature that could deliver man out of the thraldom of the fiend, but only He that had perfectly double nature in himself, and was both God and man, and would make himself as much after the will of God, as Adam by pride did against the will of God.

Furthermore, in this commandment God commandeth his people to have no strange gods. Here God commandeth that all men's belief, trust, and love, be set only in God, and in no other thing against his will. And here he forbiddeth all belief and trust in all manner of witchcraft, dreams, charms, and conjurations. For those that put their belief or trust in any such, withdraw some of their belief and trust from God, and so break his command, and make themselves false gods. And also men break this commandment in other manners; for look, whatever thou lovest most, and fastest goest about to get it, and art most loth to lose, thou showest by thy will and by thy deeds, that this thing is thy god. Therefore each man look in his own conscience, upon what he most sets his liking and thought, and what he is most busy about to please, and that thing he loveth most, whatsoever it be; and what thing a man loveth most, that thing he maketh his god.

Thus each man wilfully using deadly sin, makes himself a false god, by turning away his love from God, to the lust of the sin that he useth. And thus when man or woman forsakes meekness, the meekness that Jesus Christ commandeth, and gives himself to highness and pride, he makes the fiend his god; for he is king over all proud folk, as it is written in the book of Job. And so the envious man or woman have revenge and vengeance for their god. And the indolent man hath idleness, sloth, and sleep, for his god. The covetous man and woman make worldly goods their god; for covetousness is the root of all evils, and service to idols as to false gods, as St. Paul saith. Gluttonous and drunken folk make their belly their god, for the love and care that they have for it, as St. Paul witnesses. And so lecherous folk make them a false god for the foul delight and lust that reigns in them. Thus every man and woman, using deadly sin, breaks this first commandment, worshipping false gods. Therefore saith the great clerk, Grosthead, that each man who doeth deadly sin, runneth from, or forsaketh the true God, and worshippeth a false god—all such are false gods to rest upon, that cannot deliver themselves, nor their worshippers, from the vengeance

of almighty God, at the dreadful doom, as God saith by his prophets.

Furthermore, in this commandment God forbiddeth to make any graven image or other similitude, with intent to trust on them, or to do worship to them. And this was utterly forbidden to the Jews to whom those commandments were given. First, for the unstedfastness of their faith; for they were so false in their belief, that some of them worshipped things made of God for their gods. Some worshipped the sun, and some the moon, and some other likenesses of creatures for their god. And so the worship that was only due to God, they gave to other creatures made by God, and to similitudes and likenesses which they had made themselves, against God's will, and therefore it was utterly forbidden to them to make any similitude or likeness, for the great idolatry which they did to them, as is found in many places in the old law.

All such similitudes or images should be as kalendars to ignorant folk; and as clerks say in their books what they should do, so ignorant folks, when they lack teaching, should learn by images whom they should worship and follow in living. Each man is forbidden to do God's worship to images, but it is good to each man to learn by the sight of them to follow saints living.*

[Wickliff then proceeds to show how the sight of the sacrament hanging over the altar, and crucifixes or images, ought to induce men to lift up their souls to heaven, but "not believing or trusting that the image or likeness may bring any man out of spiritual or bodily mischief or give help or riches, or take away." He proceeds thus]—

It is written in God's law that they may neither yield to any man evil or good; neither give riches nor take away. And though any make a vow to them, and yield it not, they should not seek it. They should not deliver any man from death, nor restore a blind man to his sight, thus saith holy writ.

* The church of Rome uses this excuse for allowing images to be placed in their churches, calling them "laymen's books." But it never has been found practicable to restrain "ignorant folk" from identifying the image with the person represented, and rendering to the wood or stone the homage of respect due to the person represented, and in the case of saints, what is infinitely worse, rendering to man the homage due to God alone. It is clear that Wickliff did not advocate image worship as sanctioned by the church of Rome, although he was not fully awakened to the necessity of wholly putting away such symbols.

Moreover, God saith in this commandment that he is a jealous lover. For he willeth that all man's heart, strength, and understanding, be occupied in his law, that thou neither understand, nor will, nor think any thing contrary to God, as St. Augustine saith. St. Gregory saith, that the proving of love is the giving of work. We love God truly if we keep his commandments, and refrain us from our lusts. He that fleeteth * abroad by unlawful desires, loves not God, for he withstands his will. St. Augustine saith, "Love separates holy men from the world, and maketh men of one will to dwell together." He that has not real love is evil, and no skill, nor belief, nor giving cattle to poor men, nor penance of body profits any thing to him that has not love. The tongue, soul, and life, are inquired of respecting the love of God. The tongue, that it speak not foul, idle, or wicked words, but such as are clean, chaste, and as God's words. The soul, that it think no unclean, foul, or idle thoughts, but clean, chaste, and sweet heavenly thoughts. The life, that it work pleasingly to God's worship. For the love of God, as St. Gregory saith, is never idle; if it be love it worketh great things pleasingly to God. Christ commandeth in the gospel, that each man love him with all his heart. This that Christ saith of all the heart, and of all the soul, admits not parting with other things. For how much a man's heart is set on other things, so much it is departed from God.

God seeketh threefold love of man, of all his heart, soul, and strength, to withdraw man from the threefold lust of the world, that is, from the love of possessions and riches, from the love of highness and vain worship, and from fleshly lusts. For in these three was Christ tempted, and therefore to teach man to withstand these, he saith, Thou shalt love thy Lord God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. By what God saith in this commandment, that he visiteth the wickedness of fathers on the children, and so forth, he showeth both love and dread; but that man should be kindly led by love, he dwelleth more on love than dread. When he saith that he doeth vengeance, it is but to the third or fourth generation of them that hated him, but he doeth mercy unto a thousand kindreds of them that love him, and keep his commandments.

For by these two, that is, by love and dread, God

* Floats, wanders.

chastiseth his children as by rod or staff. Therefore he saith by his prophet, If I be thy God, where is my love; and if I be thy Lord, where is my dread? For by love and dread each man should serve God. And therefore St. Augustine saith, Holy dread of God bringeth men love. But understand not that God doeth vengeance, or punisheth the child for the father or mother that hath sinned. For the child shall not bear the wickedness of the father, as God saith by his prophet. But understand that if the father be sinful and wicked, and if the child follows and uses the sinful living of the father, then God will punish the child justly, for his own guilt; and this is what God saith in the text, that he will punish the children of them that hated him. God punisheth not the children for the father's and mother's guilt, but for that the children were like them in manner, and in like sins hated God.

THE SECOND (THIRD) COMMANDMENT.

In the second commandment, God saith thus to each man, "Thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord God in vain; for God shall not have him without guilt that taketh his name idly, or without a cause."

In two manners man may take God's name in vain; both in manner of living, and also in swearing. When man is baptized, and taketh christendom,* then is the name of Christ put in his soul, who is both God and man, and name above all names; as St. Paul saith, Therefore he forsakes the devil and his works, that is, sin; and makes covenant to be Christ's true servant and to keep his biddings. But when man breaks this covenant, and becomes the fiend's servant, doing deadly sin, then he takes Christ's name in vain while he serves the fiend, doing his works, as St. Peter saith. And therefore saith St. Augustine, Let no man deem himself to be a true christian man, unless he live according to the lore or teaching of Christ.

In another manner man takes God's name in vain, as by swearing, or forswearing, and cares not how. For from a young child that scarcely can speak, to an old bearded man whom God hath almost deprived of speech, this command of God is broken. For many have brought themselves into such a perilous custom, that they can scarcely speak a word but they swear by God in vain, or by some

* Professes to be a follower of Christ.

of his creatures. St. Augustine saith, that to swear by God, or by any saint, is to call them to bear witness of what thou swearest. Bethink thee well; if thou calledst a poor man to bear witness of every word thou speakest, in a little time he would have indignation, and say that thou didst scorn him—much more almighty God, who forbids such vain swearing and calling to bear witness. The cause should be both true and right needful, if men should call such a Lord as God is, to bear witness thereof, and therefore God forbids this vain swearing by his name, in this commandment, and in many other places in his law. And Christ forbids swearing by creatures, in the gospel of Matthew, where he commandeth to swear not, neither by heaven nor by earth. In that he forbids to swear by heaven, he forbids to swear by the saints that are in heaven, and in that he forbids to swear by earth, he forbids to swear by any creature in earth. And herewith accords St. James, saying, Dear brethren, before all things swear ye not, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath, lest you fall under the doom of God. And St. John Chrysostom saith that it is idolatry, or worshipping of false gods, to swear by a creature. Yea, as he saith, This is sovereign blasphemy, since this swearing, as much as is in the swearer, makes the creature by which he sweareth, to be God; since it is reserved to God only, that men swear by him, with three conditions which God rehearses by Jeremiah the prophet; which are—he that shall swear be compelled by doom *—that he verily know his cause be true—and also needful to help his fellow-christian in his right. Else should each man keep him from swearing. For if any of these three conditions fail, there is a premunire.†

And since Almighty God in his law saith, that he shall not be unpunished who taketh God's name thus in vain, what punishment suppose we shall they have, who not only take his name in vain, but also dismember him, and crucify him by swearing by his heart, and by his wounds, and other members? Such do more despite to Christ than the Jews did who nailed him to the cross, as St. Augustine and St. Gregory say. For this manner of swearing is called blasphemy, and one of the greatest despites that man may do to God—to swear by his limbs, and to upbraid him with his painful passion.‡

* By lawful authority. † A penalty.

‡ These oaths were very common in Wickliff's time, and some of

The fiend hath found three false excuses for swearing, and hath taught them his servants, to withstand and excuse their sin. Some say in scorn, as the fiend teaches them, Is it not good to have God often in mind? And some say, I may swear, for I swear truth. And some say, But if I swear not, no man will believe me. With these three false excuses men suppose to excuse themselves for such sinful vain swearing, but they accuse themselves before God, and make their sin more grievous. For as to the first, I pray thee, if thy servant did what thou hadst forbidden him, even the oftener he did it, the worse thou wouldst be pleased, and more yet if he scorned thee, and said he did so from love, to have thee in mind! To the second false and feigned excuse may be answered thus; A man should not swear always when he saith truth, for each man ought to say truth when he speaks any thing. For God forbiddeth any man to lie, and thus by his false excuse, man should swear at every word, if it were lawful to swear even when he saith truth. But this is openly false, as holy writ witnesses. It is written in the book of Ecclesiasticus, that a man who sweareth much shall be full filled with wickedness, and vengeance shall not depart from that house in which many oaths are used. And to those who say that no man will believe them unless they swear, this methinks is a foul excusation; since a false man may swear as much as a true man, and thus should men believe by oaths a false man as well as a true man. For commonly the more false a man is, the more oaths he will swear; and commonly he that will readiest swear, will gladly forswear and beguile. For he that dreadeth not to break God's command, will not be afraid to be false. But Christ bids not belief to oaths that are sworn, but he fully teaches to believe the deeds. For if men knew that thou wert true in thy words, and in thy deeds, they would ask no oath of thee, for it should not avail. But since thou art varying and untrusty in word and in deed, therefore men believe thee not, unless thou wilt swear.

Therefore if thou wilt be believed without swearing, be true of thy tongue, and discreet of thy words; and take heed to Christ's word where he forbids thee to swear by

the blasphemous expressions which are heard in the present day, are derived from them. The writings of Chaucer, and other contemporaries of Wickliff, show the awful prevalence of profane oaths at that period.

heaven or by earth, or by thine own head, for thou mayest not make a hair thereof either white or black. But let thy words be yea, yea, nay, nay, without any oath, for what thou swearest more than thus it is of evil. For all manner of truth standeth either in yea or in nay; and the heart and mouth should accord in speech, and not say one thing and think another; therefore Christ doubleth this yea, and this nay, and thus they should be christian men's word, without vain swearing, either by God or his creatures.

THE THIRD (FOURTH) COMMANDMENT.

The third command of God is commanded by him thus, "Have mind that thou hallow the holy day; in six days thou shalt work thine own works; the seventh day is the rest of thy Lord God. That day thou shalt do no servile work, neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy servant, nor thy work-beast, nor the stranger that dwelleth in thine house. For in six days God made heaven and earth, sea, and all things that are within them, and rested the seventh day; and therefore he blessed that day, and made it holy." Instead of the seventh day, which was hallowed in the Old Testament by God's commandment, christian men, of their devotion, hallow the eighth day,* that is, the Sunday, wherein Christ rose again from the dead. The Sunday, as ignorant people call it, in holy writ is called the Lord's day. This was the first day of the world, wherein light was made. On this day, Christ rose again from death to life immortal. On this day, the Holy Ghost came down to the apostles, and gave to them understanding, wisdom, charity, and hardiness to preach God's truth, and die therefore.

But since sin is the worst work of bondage, for it makes men bound to the fiend of hell—and he is the worst lord that any man may serve, for he rewards his servants with nothing but with pain—therefore men should busy themselves on the holy day to learn God's law, which might teach them to flee sin, and to rest in their God; and they should flee fleshly lusts, taverns, and chafferings,† that hinder this end; and bewail their before-done sins, beseeching grace and might, to withstand others to come. This lesson God teacheth in a book of his law. And therefore

* The first day of the week, John xx. 1–26.

† Bargainings.

saith St. Augustine, If it need us christian men to have delight and mirth in holy days, let us delight in God's word, and seek our delights in declaring God's law. Let us not ordain precious feasts for the belly and the throat, but so hallow the holy days, that we follow them in living, of whom these feasts are. For a devout follower pleases God more than an idle praiser, or a praiser by mouth only. True praising of heart is following of work. For to worship with mouth, and not to follow in living, is nothing else but falsely to flatter. Truly to this end are holy days ordained, that by them the congregation of christian men be stirred to follow the saints of God.

In three manners men break this commandment of God. First, we see that all things kindly,* after travail seek rest. God in six days made heaven and earth, and all things within them, and rested on the seventh day. Apostles, and martyrs, and other saints, travailed on this world, withstanding sin, and suffered much for God's love and his truth, and now they rest in heaven. But many men and women of this world, travail busily all the week, and yet they will not rest on the Sunday. If there be either fair, or market, or any other place where they may win any money, then they, and their servant, and their work-beast, shall busily labour therefore. And it seems that all such folk have lost their spiritual mind, and are like to none but them that are in hell; for they never rest, but evermore travail in pain, and shall do so, world without end, as the prophet saith. Would God that all such folk would have mind how a man was stoned to death by the commandment of God, because he gathered sticks on the holy day, as it is written in a book of God's law, and did no greater trespass. For such folk gather many brands of covetousness, and other great sins, to burn their souls in pain, unless they amend before death.

In the second manner many men break this commandment, for many cease on the holy day from great bodily travails, but they occupy themselves in great spiritual sins; for such folk cleanse out the gnat, and swallow the camel, holding that there is more peril in a little bodily work, than in a great spiritual sin; although every other should be left on the holy day! Nevertheless, St. Augustine saith, that it is less trespass to go to the plough, to dig, or delve, and for women to spin on the holy day, than to lead dances and

* Naturally.

frequent taverns. For such folk in a manner hallow the work days, doing good and lawful works, and in the holy days spend their life in drunkenness and gluttony, lechery and pride, and such great deadly sins. In the work day they are busy to travail for livelihood for their body, but in the holy day they give their souls to the fiend, for lust and liking of divers sins. To such folk God speaketh by his prophet, saying that he will throw in their faces the filth of their sins, which they do in the holy day. And in another place he saith, that he hateth their solemnities, that is, for the sins that are done in them. And it is written in the book of mourning (Lamentations) that our enemies, that is fiends, have seen our occupations, and they have scorned our holy days.

In the third manner this command is broken by them that spend their time in idle and vain plays, and have great liking to behold and see vanities, and to hear and to tell idle tales, and to speak of filth and of sin, and to backbite their fellow christians when they sit together. And thereby they destroy the virtue and grace that should be in their souls, as St. Bernard saith. For as good speech and chaste words increase virtue and grace in the souls of speakers and hearers, so foul words of lechery and of other sins, defoul the souls, both of them that speak, and of them that hear, if they consent thereto, as St. Paul saith.

Therefore, whosoever will hallow his holy day to God's worship, learn he another lesson, and understand how God commandeth in his commandment to have regard to the holy day. For man should on the holy day put out of his heart all worldly thoughts, and occupy his mind in heavenly desires, and think on the great goodness and mercy that God hath done for him, how He made him of nought, and like to himself in soul. What greater token of love might he show, than to make the servant like to the Lord? Also, have mind that when thou wert a child of wrath, and of hell, for the sin of Adam, Christ laid his life to pledge, to bring thee out of that prison; and he gave not as ransom for thee either gold or silver, or any other jewel, but his own precious blood that ran out of his heart. And this principally should move all christian men to have mind of God, and to worship him in thought, word, and deed.

Have mind also, how thou hast often, since thou wert christened, broken his commands, and done many great sins, and yet of his own goodness he abideth thee, without

taking vengeance, where he might justly, for one deadly sin, put thee in pain for ever, and do thee no wrong.

Also have mind how he of his goodness, governeth thee in thy right senses, and keepeth thee by night and by day, where he suffereth others for their sin to fall into great mischief both of body and soul. And from all such mischiefs by his mercy he hath kept thee. Think also how unkind* thou hast been against him, and all these great goodnesses which he hath willingly done to thee; and how thou, as an unkind wretch, against all these mercies, and many more, hast given him gall to drink, of bitter and foul sins; and often wittingly and wilfully hast broken his commandments, both in thought, word, and deed.

That thou shouldest have mind of all these goodnesses, and many more which he hath done to thee, and of the manifold trespasses which thou hast done against him—and since the having of such mind, demands to have rest of body and of soul, and such rest should be had on the holy day—therefore God commandeth each man to have mind to hallow his holy day. For each man's mind or thought should be kept from vanities, and occupied thereabout, and therefore God called the holy day, the day of rest. For each man should be busy to purchase rest of soul and body, and to avoid all things for the time that hinder this. For resting on the Sunday betokens the resting in bliss after this life, and they that will not keep rest of soul this day, and avoid sin, it is to be dreaded, that unless they amend, they will lose the rest of bliss to come.

In these three (four) first commands, each man is taught how he shall love God; and in the seven (six) ensuing, he is taught how he shall love his fellow christian, what he shall do to them, and what he shall leave.

THE FOURTH (FIFTH) COMMANDMENT.

The first command of these seven, God saith in this wise, "Worship† thou thy father and thy mother; that thou mayest be of long life upon earth." And both nature and reason will this. What man or woman shouldest thou worship,

* Unnatural. † Reverence.

if thou shouldest not worship them that brought thee forth, and loved and helped thee, when thou mightest not, neither couldest help thyself. And St. Augustine saith it is a brutish condition for a child to forget to worship and to love his father and his mother.

Three manner of fathers we should worship. The first is the Father who createth from nothing; the second is him that is our father by nature; the third is the father by age, and especially by virtues. The principal father that we should worship is Almighty God, who made us, body and soul, and nourisheth the body with food that cometh of the earth, and comforteth every good soul with heavenly desire. This Father defendeth every soul that is true to him, from the power of the fiend, who would overset it, and granteth it through his grace, to be an heir in heaven. And this may no father do, but only God almighty; for he is Father of all, most rightful and mighty, whom no man may withstand. And therefore, we should worship him over all other, for he is our Father, our Lord, and our God, and he shall be our Judge at the last day, and for the endless reward that he keepeth for us if we keep his commands. For whoso loves his father or mother, or any other creature more than Him, he is not worthy to have him, as he saith himself. And St. Augustine saith, that as there may be no moment or time, in which man uses not God's goodness and his mercy, so ought there to be no moment or time, in which man hath him not in mind, for to worship him.

The second father that we should worship, is he that is our father by nature. To him we should be subject, and meek, and serviceable, as Christ teacheth by his own doing. For he was subject and serviceable to his mother and to Joseph. And since he is and was very God, and would be subject and serviceable to an earthly creature, how shall we mortal wretches escape from the wrath of him, if we be rebellious, out of reason, against our father and mother? And therefore, let each child worship and reverence his father and his mother, and help them in their need, both bodily and spiritually. Give them of thy goods freely if they have need, and thou have more than they. And travail for them with the strength of thy body, and counsel and comfort them after thy ability, and reverence them with the words of thy mouth; for he that missayeth his father or his mother shall die an evil death, as God's law saith. And if thou art wiser than they, counsel, and teach them in all meek manner, how

they should live justly, to please God almighty; and help them out of old customs of sin and unreasonable manners. For he that is negligent in this, does great wrong to his father and mother, if he may, by any easy means, amend such defaults.

And look that no child consent to sin for any fleshly worship* of father or mother; for bowing to sin is not obedience, but the greatest rebellion that man can do against God, or any christian man. For man should not consent to sin to win all the world. Christ asketh, what it profiteth a man to win all the world and suffer loss to his own soul?

The third fathers we should worship are men of age, and especially of virtue. For many old men and women there are who are full of vices, and so they are but children in understanding, although they are of great bodily age. Therefore worship thou in all such that which God made, which is body and soul, but beware that thou consent not to sin; for it is a foul abuse, as St. Augustine saith, for a man or woman of great age to be without good living.

THE FIFTH (SIXTH) COMMANDMENT.

In the fifth command, God forbids all wrongful manslaying, both of body and soul. For this is one of the sins that ever cry for vengeance before Almighty God. And therefore God said to Cain, Lo the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the earth. This sin of manslaughter† is so grievous in God's sight, that he commanded in the old testament, before Christ's coming, that if any man, by lying in wait, or any treachery, killed a man, and afterwards fled to God's altar for succour, yet should he be taken away from thence, and be slain for that deed. And therefore St. John saith, He that slayeth shall be slain. For the same measure that thou measurest to another shall be measured to thee, as Christ saith himself, and therefore he commanded Peter to put up his sword in the time of his suffering. But open trespassers that will not be amended in other manner, must by just doom be slain, by them that bear the sword of temporal punishing, without trespassing against this command of God, as St. Paul saith. Therefore let each

* Earthly regard.

† By manslaughter the reformers usually mean wilful murder, not the unpremeditated slaying, now termed manslaughter by the law.

man beware of malicious bodily manslaying, that no man by deed, nor by will, nor by procuring others, for hate or for dread, assent to this sin. For God will take great vengeance on him, who for his own malicious will slayeth any man, or procureth thereto against God's law, unless he amend him* before he die.

Of spiritual manslaying there are many manners. The first is manslaying of heart. For each man that hates his fellow christian in his heart is a manslayer, as St. John saith. The second is, when man wilfully assenting to wicked thoughts of his heart, turneth from goodness. The third manner is, by unlawful lusts and desires engendered in the heart, which will slay him that is slow to put them away. As it is written, Desires slay the slothful.

Also there is a spiritual manslaughter by mouth; and that is in three manners. The first is in lying, for the mouth that lieth slayeth the soul. The second is of backbiting, for that is the tongue of the adder, which stingeth in stillness, as is written in a book of God's law. The backbiter slayeth first himself through his own wickedness, and the malice of his heart; and also him that heareth and consenteth to his false telling, and after, peradventure, makes it worse. Also he slayeth him whom he backbiteth, as much as he is able, for he makes him lose his good praise and fame. And also when this comes to his ear who is spoken of, then he is out of charity, and thus the backbiter slayeth three at once. The third manner of manslaughter by mouth, is false flattering, or praising in sin and wickedness, or for a man to show glosing† words to another whom he hateth in his heart. Those that flatter men in sin by any false colouring, hide other men's spiritual death in their own error, not telling them their perils, nor reproving their defaults, either for dread or for covetousness. Thus some preachers are guilty of manslaughter. Other glosers and flatterers, who bear honey in their mouths by smooth words, and gall of death in their hearts by secret hate, are figured in holy writ by Joab, who met with Amasias, and spake fair with him, as though he would have kissed him, and under colour thereof killed him.

Also a man is said to slay himself spiritually, when he knowingly and wilfully doth deadly sin; for then he maketh God depart from him, who is the life of the soul, as St. Augustine saith. And therefore Christ saith that the

* Repent. † False, flattering.

devil hath been a manslayer from the beginning. For first he slew himself with sin, and all the angels that consented to him. Also he slew Adam and Eve through his false enticing; and so he doth those whom he may overcome with deadly sin. Therefore it is written, Flee thou sin, as thou wouldest flee from the biting of an adder; for it is as bitter as the teeth of a lion, slaying the souls of men.

Also there is manslaughter in other manner, in which man is said to slay his fellow christian; as he or she that hath the goods of the world, and seeth man or woman in great default or mischief, and will not help them. I speak not of pardoners, nor of bold beggars,* but of them that are poor, feeble, crooked, blind, and lame, or in some other mischief, by the sufferance of God; and others who have pain and default, who are ashamed to ask, and would rather suffer much mischief than beg. Of whom it is said in holy writ, Thou hast seen a man dying for hunger;† if thou hast not fed him thou hast slain him.

* Sellers of the pope's pardons or indulgences, and begging friars. Chaucer thus describes one of the latter. After preaching on purgatory, and urging his hearers to pay for their friends' deliverance,

When folk in church had gave him what they list,
He went his way, no longer would he rest.
With scrip and tipped staff, y tucked high,
In every house he gan to pore and pry,
And begged meal and cheese, or else corn.
His fellow had a staff tipped with horn,
A pair of tables all of ivory,
A pointell y polished fetously,‖ *(‖ Skilfully.)*
And wrote always the names as he stood
Of all folks that gave them any good,
Askaunce that he would for them pray,
"Give us a bushel wheat, malt, or rye,
A God's kichell,‡ or a trippe of cheese, *(‡ A little cake.)*
Or else what ye list, I may not choose,
A God's halfpenny, or a mass penny,
Or give us of your brawn, if ye have any,
A dagon§ of your blanket, dear dame, *(§ A piece.)*
Our sister dear, lo here I write your name,
Bacon or beef, or such thing as ye find."
A sturdy harlot went him aye behind,
That was their host's man, and bare a sack,
And what men gave them, laid it on his back.
And when he was out at the door, anon,
He plained away the names every one,
That he before had written in his tables;
He served them with nifles and with fables."

Such were the days of popery in England! See note on the Supplication of Beggars. Frith, p. 59.

† This unhappily was not so uncommon at that period as in later days. The old chronicles relate numerous instances. Hollinshed thus

Also, if any man by fraud, or by sleight, or by any other false tricks, as by weight or measure; or by deceit in chaffer,* or by withholding of labourer's hire, gets other men's goods to make himself rich, he is said to be a manslayer. Therefore, let all those beware that take any thing by wrong, or by false pretence, supposing to be free because they give to another under the colour of alms, but it is none. For all alms must be given of true gotten goods, and to those that Christ limiteth.†

Of such folk as by rapine and deceit slay their fellow christians, taking from them their livelihood, and so their life, God speaketh by his prophets, saying, Your hands are fouled with blood, your fingers are full of wickedness. And he that wieldeth by violence, by theft, or by fraud, or deceit, that whereby poor men ought to be sustained, hath hands defouled with blood of poor, and he that eats and drinks of such possessions, and clothes himself, and builds houses, and walls of such possessions, eats and drinks the blood of poor men, is clothed in the blood of poor men, and lays the foundation of his buildings in the blood of poor men. Let such men hear the word of God, Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, his blood shall be shed.

Also there is a manslaying by giving evil example. Also there is manslaughter of negligence or carelessness, of which God speaketh by his prophet, to each curate or priest, If thou speakest not to the people, that a wicked man keep him from his evil way, he shall die in his wickedness, I shall seek his blood at thy hand.

THE SIXTH (SEVENTH) COMMANDMENT.

The sixth command of God forbids all manner of lechery, both bodily and spiritual. For of all sins this is

describes a famine in England, A. D. 1317. "In this season victuals were so scarce and dear, and wheat and other grain brought so high a price, that the poor people were constrained through famine to eat the flesh of horses, dogs, and other vile beasts, which is wonderful to believe, and yet for default there died a great multitude of people in divers places of the land." Grafton calculates the price of corn then to have been equal to what eight pounds a quarter would have been in queen Elizabeth's days, which may be estimated as not less than thirty pounds at the present day.

* Bargaining.

† It was very common for those who had acquired wealth by force or fraud, to endow monasteries in order to pacify their consciences.

the foulest For why? Other sins defile only the soul, but this defiles both body and soul, as St. Paul saith. And among all other sins, this most pleases the fiend. In other sins, commonly he getteth only one at once, but in this at the least he getteth two. For the sin of lechery God hath taken great vengeance, as is shown in holy writ. See the history of Dinah, and of the daughters of Moab.

To this deed the devil tempteth in five manners, as St. Gregory saith. The first by foolish looking, after by unhonest words, and after that by foul touching, and in foul kissing, and so cometh to the deed. Thus craftily the devil bringeth from one to another. Therefore Job saith, I have made covenant with mine eyes that I shall not think upon a maid. And women that array themselves nicely, to be seen of fools, sin grievously, for by their nice array and countenance they cause the loss of many souls. It is a foul abuse to see a woman without chastity of soul. Two manners belong to the keeping of chastity—that the outward array be not to show, but to conceal and hide, and that the desire of the heart be set to God and heavenly things, destroying foul thoughts of the heart and idle words and vain.

It behoveth to flee occasion thereof, as company and place, and delicate and lustful meats and drinks, that excite thereto. And therefore saith a great clerk, that in this sin a man must especially be God's coward,* and flee from occasion that moves to this sin, and trust not to strength, understanding, or to wisdom. For what man was stronger than Samson? Who was more able than David? Who was wiser than Solomon? And yet those three were burned with the fire of lechery. Therefore let him that will be God's clean child, as God's coward, flee all occasions and companies that move him to this sin.

The second medicine that helps against this sin, is to keep the body from lustful meats and drinks. The third is, to keep out of idleness, and to busy thy mind in clean thoughts, and thy body in clean occupations. For such lusts come not unless thoughts go before.

Spiritual lechery, is when man's soul turneth to the fiend by lust of deadly sin. For Christ and man's soul are wedded together through true belief, love, charity, and keeping of his commands, and leaving of sin, as God saith by his prophet. But when man, by his own devices, turns

* In the fear of God.

to deadly sin, and leaveth the love of Christ, he sins in spiritual lechery with the fiend.

THE SEVENTH (EIGHTH) COMMANDMENT.

The seventh command, God saith in these words, "Thou shalt not do theft." Theft, as a learned man saith, is a taking away of goods without the leave and will of him that owns them. In this command, God forbids all manner of wrong taking and withholding of any man's goods—all privy stealing, robbing, and beguiling—all sleights and deceits in buying and selling. Therefore let each man beware, that he do no theft, lest God do vengeance on him, as he did on Achan. And if he have any thing of other men wrongfully, by theft, subtlety, or deceit, let him restore and make restitution or satisfaction therefore, by all his power, else the sin is not forgiven, as St. Augustine saith.

Since theft is taking of other men's goods against the will of them that own them, it seems hereby that all wrong getting of goods, by usury, by rapine, by false weights and measures, and secret guile, is theft done by covetousness to have other men's goods against God's will, and them that own them. Therefore, saith St. Paul, to make us beware, whoever desires thus to be rich, fall into temptation and snare of the devil, and into many grievous and unprofitable desires, which drown men in death and damnation. For covetousness is the root of all evils. And in another place he saith, Let no man beguile his brother in chaffering by any deceit, for God takes vengeance upon them that so do. Therefore, those that are great of power in this world, let them not rob nor beguile those that are smaller, neither by rapine, nor by extortion, nor by false claims; but let them be satisfied with the wages that are limited to them for their livelihood. For so John the Baptist commanded the soldiers, as the gospel witnesses.

Therefore, let not him that is a merchant, or a victualler, deceive his fellow christian, as St. Paul exhorts, neither with meat, nor measure, nor any other deceit, to make himself rich by goods gotten by rapine. For God punisheth all that do such things. And Christ saith, The same measure that ye mete to others shall be meted to you again. Therefore, let each man beware that he defraud not any man for his own covetousness, and be no swearer

or liar, in selling or in buying. For it is written by the Holy Ghost's teaching, that whoso gathereth treasures with a lying tongue, he is vain and evil. And against him that sweareth and forsweareth himself in buying and selling, or in any other manner, Zechariah. the prophet of God, speaketh thus: He saith that he saw a book flying in the air, which was twenty cubits long and ten in breadth. And the angel said to him, It is the curse of God, that goeth to thieves' houses, and to all men's houses that forswear themselves by the name of God. And God speaketh by his prophet, against those who with evil gotten goods, buy lands and rents, and make great buildings, bitterly cursing them for their falseness. Wo be to you, saith he, who bind house to house, and field to field, and say right is wrong and wrong is right—and so say all men who by any falseness gather goods together. Therefore, saith God by another prophet, Wo be to them that multiply things that are not their own.

And let him that is a labourer, or a craftsman, do his craft or his labour truly, without sleight or other deceit, as St. Paul exhorts by the teaching of God. And let no man, with wrong, withhold the workman's hire. For that is one of the four sins that ever cry vengeance before God, as St. James saith. Also, in this command, God forbids the cursed sin of usury, in which men sin after divers manners.

THE EIGHTH (NINTH) COMMANDMENT.

In the eighth command, God forbiddeth every man and every woman to bear any false witness against their fellow christian. For through false witness many a right heir loses his heritage, and many a guiltless man is put to death. Thus Christ who was most innocent, and never did sin, was condemned to death by means of two false witnesses. Therefore, let each man and woman beware of their words, that they bear no witness by word or by swearing, for any thing, unless they know verily that it is right and true. And understand what peril he hath who knowingly bears false witness, and forswears himself on the holy book.

Also, in this command, God forbiddeth all leasings.* For each leasing is a false witness against Christ, who is very truth, as he saith himself. Therefore Christ called the

* Lies, falsehood.

devil a liar, and the father of lies. For he found the first leasing, and made it himself, when he said to Eve in Paradise, that she should not die, though she ate of the fruit of the tree God had forbidden upon pain of death, but that Adam and she should be as gods, knowing good and evil. But this was a leasing, and that Adam and Eve knew soon after eating the fruit. And therefore the devil is said to be father of all false witness bearers and liars, and they are said to be his children, by following in manners and in their living. Therefore Christ said to the Jews, that they were of their father the devil, for they wrought his desires. Therefore, let each man beware, for it is written, The lips that lie are abominable to the Lord.

Therefore let each man beware that neither for dread, for hate, nor for gift, he use leasing; neither bear any false witness against his fellow christian. For Judas sold truth, when he sold Christ for money. And they who for gift or reward, bear false witness and deny truth, do the same sin spiritually that Judas did bodily. For while they for coveting any thing, deny truth, they sell Christ that is truth, therefore let each man keep himself from leasing, and all those by his might that he hath power over. For a great doctor saith, that though a man might by a private leasing save all this world, which else should perish, yet should he not lie to save it.

Leasing stands not only in false words, but also in feigned works, and in manner of living. And therefore let each man and woman who is called a christian, look that their living accord with the lore and teaching of Christ. And let him that is called a priest of Christ, know and teach by living and word, the law of his Lord; lest he be of those that St. Paul speaks of, who acknowledge by mouth and by word that they know God, but in their works and living they deny the knowing of him. Of which manner of folk, St. John speaks, saying, He that saith he knoweth God, and keepeth not his commands, he is a liar, and there is no truth in him. And in another place he saith, He that saith that he loveth God, and hateth his brother, is a liar. Of such manner of liars, St. Ambrose speaks, saying, Brethren, flee ye leasing, for all that love leasings are sons of the devil. Not only in false words, but in feigned works, is leasing, for it is leasing for a man to call himself a christian, and not to do the works of Christ. It is leasing for any man to acknowledge himself bishop, priest, or clerk, and to

work things contrary to those orders. Therefore let each man, in his degree, be busy to seek the truth of Christ's teaching, to live thereafter, and so to flee sin.

THE NINTH (TENTH, FIRST PART) COMMANDMENT.

The ninth command is this, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house," and in another place God saith, "Thou shalt not desire thy neighbour's field." Here God forbids all wrongful desire and coveting of other men's goods, both of house and land, gold and silver, clothes, corn, and all other things that cannot move themselves from one place to another. And as in the seventh command God forbids the deed of wrongfully taking any man's goods, so in this command he forbids all manner of wrongful desire, or coveting in heart to any man's goods. This command touches the ground of all evil—having such manner of goods. For no man wrongfully hath any such goods unless the ground of his having be false coveting in heart. And therefore, as a weed is well cleansed out of land when the root is drawn away, so these four commands are well kept when false coveting of the heart is fully quenched.

Of the great harm that cometh of false coveting in man's heart, a great clerk speaks, saying, Oh how many men has covetousness deceived and destroyed! As Balaam, Achan, Gehazi, Judas, Ananias and Sapphira, and others. Holy writ also speaks of the mischief that comes of false covetousness, and wrong desire of man's heart, by the example of Ahab who coveted the vineyard of Naboth, and Jezebel the queen, upon whom sentence was fulfilled as God had said. And therefore let each man and woman beware, that false desire or covetousness to have any man's goods with wrong, or against his will, reign not in their hearts; lest worse befall them than befell king Ahab and Jezebel his queen.

THE TENTH (SECOND PART) COMMANDMENT.

In the tenth commandment, God saith in this manner; "Thou shalt not desire the wife of thy neighbour; nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his." In this command, God forbids the will and consent of each unreasonable desiring, and wrong coveting of all things that are alive, and may move themselves from one place to another. Thus God forbids the sins of man's

will in all things, for oftimes it befalls, that sin is more grounded in evil will than in deed. And as God in the sixth command forbids the sin of lechery, so he forbids in this command, the will and consent of the heart. For as the deed is deadly sin, so is the full consent and the desire of the heart deadly sin, as Christ saith himself.

Therefore, let each man and woman bethink busily what thought enters into their heart, and if any thought is about to draw the reason of their soul to consent to any sin, let him not muse on that thought, but without delay sternly put it away, moving his heart to think upon the bitter pains that Christ suffered, and upon the endless joys of heaven, which he loses if he consent to that sin; and upon the bitter and endless pains of hell that he shall have at his end, if he die in that desire or sin which this wicked thought will bring him to, if it abide in the heart till the reason of the soul consent.

And also let each woman beware, that neither by countenance, nor by array of body, nor of head, she stir any to covet her to sin. Not crooking* her hair, neither laying it upon high, nor the head arrayed about with gold and precious stones, not seeking curious clothing, nor of nice shape, showing herself to be seemly to fools. For all such array of women, St. Peter and St. Paul, by the Holy Ghost's teaching, openly forbid. But let them be in clothing of shamefacedness and soberness; being subject to their husbands, after the rule of reason, as St. Peter and St. Paul teach; that they who believe not God's word be won to health, beholding in awe the holy and chaste conversation of women. Thus in old time good women and holy, believing in God, adorned themselves, as St. Peter saith.

CONCLUSION.

These are the ten commands of God, after which it behoves all men and women to rule their life, if they would be saved, and therefore Christ saith to each man, if he will enter into life that shall last for ever, keep these commands. These commands men should teach their children and their households. And therefore God commandeth to his people, that each man tell to his sons how God led his people out of Egypt, And it shall be as a token in thy hand, saith God, and as a thing to be minded, before thine eye, and let the law of the Lord be ever in thy mouth, Exod. xiii.

* Curling.

And in another place, Deut. vi. God saith, These words which I command to thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shall tell them to thy sons, and thou shalt think on them, sitting in thine house, and going in the way, and sleeping and rising. And thou shalt bind them as a sign in thine hand, and they shall be betwixt thine eyes, and thou shalt write them on the lintels and door-posts of thy house. That is, thou shalt rule all thy thoughts, words, and deeds, secret and open, within thy house and without, by the commandments of God. Keep thyself and thy soul carefully; nor forget thou the words which thine eyes have seen, and let them not fall from thine heart, in all the days of thy life. Thou shalt teach them to thy sons and to those that are near to thee. And St. Augustine saith to all christian men, Govern ye your houses, govern ye your sons, govern ye your household attendants. As it pertains to us to speak to you in the church, so it pertains to you to do in your houses; that ye yield good reason to God, of them that are subject to you. St. Paul saith, He that hath not care of his own, and most of his own household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than a heathen man. Therefore let each man first learn and do in deed himself, and after that excite and move others to keep these commandments.

[Wickliff then exhorts men, not "to be negligent to learn, for dread of the sentence that God saith in his law." He quotes at length Deuteronomy xxviii., and adds,] That all men and women may have grace truly to keep the commands of God, and therethrough flee these curses, and have these blessings; and ever to be above in virtue, and never under in sin, and after that, to reign above in everlasting bliss, grant, Jesus Christ, that bought man with his heart's blood, merciful God. Amen.

All these ten commands of God are contained in two words of love—that is, To love God above all things, and thy fellow christian as thyself. For he that loveth God above all things, will worship no God but one, and he will hallow his holy day, for every day he will live holily, and out of great sin. For certain, every day that a man liveth in deadly sin, is the devil's work day, for the day man doeth the devil's works, he serveth the devil and not God, though he sing, preach, or read holy words. And he will not take God's name in vain; for he who loveth God above all things, will do nothing that God forbiddeth him. And he who loveth his fellow christian as himself, keepeth the other

commands; for he reverences his elders and all his fellow christians. And he will not slay his fellow christians in any manner, nor commit lechery, and he will not be a thief to rob his fellow christian, by any deceit or taking of his goods against his will. And he that loveth his fellow christian as himself, will not bear any false witness, and he will not covet his neighbour's house, nor land, nor wife, nor servant, nor any other goods that he owns. Thus the ten commands of God are kept in these two words of love. Therefore saith St. Paul, Whoso loveth, fulfilleth all the law. Whoso loveth God over all things, is ever dreading to offend him in thought, word, or deed. And to love thy fellow christian, is neither to covet, nor to suffer, nor counsel or procure, nor to consent to any thing to be done to him, other than thou shouldest desire were done to thee, if thou wert in his state. And therefore saith Christ himself, confirming this sentence, All things that ye desire men should do to you, do ye the same to them.

[Wickliff enforces these considerations at considerable length by quotations from the scripture and the fathers. He proceeds,]

Whoso loveth God over all other things, and his neighbour as himself, will not be proud. For pride is either an unskilful highness, through which a man is disobedient to God and his commands, or it is an unreasonable highness, through which a man exalts himself above his fellow-christians, and despises them. Also, he that hath this love leaveth covetousness. For he that loveth God above all other things, and his fellow christian as he should, will desire nothing that is against the will of God, or harming to his fellow christian.

And he that hath this love will not live in sloth, for he will endeavour with all his might to serve his God in keeping his commands. And after the grace that he hath received of God, he will forsake his own ease, and put himself to travail and pain for the welfare of his brother. And he that hath this love will have no deadly wrath to any man, nor desire vengeance on him, though he have trespassed greatly against him. And he that hath this love, hath no envy to his fellow christian. For neither will he be glad of their harm, nor sorry for their welfare. And he that hath this love, will not for his filthy lust bring his sister into sorrow. And he that hath this love, will not take his meat or his drink but in measure, as he needs. For whoso doeth

otherwise, doeth gluttony, and taketh his meat and his drink against the ordinances of God. And whoso hath this love, doeth the works of mercy to his brother.

[Wickliff enlarges upon love to our neighbours, recapitulating much that he had previously stated, and concludes:]

Thus in these ten commands of God, contained in two words of love, all good is fulfilled, and all evil eschewed.* And that we may live and end in this love, and so come to everlasting bliss, grant us, Jesus Christ, that liveth and reigneth, without end, merciful God. Amen. Amen.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

PROLOGUE.

Christ saith, whoso loveth him, will keep his commandments; and they that keep them are his friends, as he saith in another place. And he will hear his friends, and grant them all reasonable things that they ask of him, needful to health of soul and body. And all things needful to man, either for soul or body, are contained in the Lord's prayer. It is the prayer full of wisdom and health which Christ taught his disciples.

This holy prayer contains seven askings. And in these short askings is contained more wisdom than any tongue of man can fully tell here on earth. When a child is first set to school, men teach him his paternoster, (the Lord's prayer,) therefore, let him that will learn, be meek as a child, and without malice. God careth not for long tarrying, nor for smooth words, either rhymed or in prayer. For St. Gregory saith, True praying is not to speak fine words with the mouth, but to make great complaint and sorrow for sin, with sore sighing of heart, and great desire of forgiveness. What is it to patter with lips when the heart prayeth not by desire? What difference there is betwixt the bran and the flour of the wheat, such there is between the sound of the lips and the devotion of heart. When the mouth prayeth God for one thing, and the heart is busy about another, such worship God with lips, but the heart of them is far from him, as he complaineth by the prophet.†

* Avoided, put out.

† Wickliff then states eight things needful to man when praying to God.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

The first asking is, *Our Father that art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.* In that thou callest him Father, thou acknowledgest that he is Maker and Lord of heaven, earth, and hell, and Governor of all creatures, of whom all goodness cometh, and thus thou acknowledgest his might. And since he is Lord and Father, each man owes him dread and love. Therefore he asketh each man by his prophet, saying, The son worships the father, and the servant the lord. Therefore if I am Father, where is my worship; and if I be Lord, where is my dread? This word, Father, shows to each good christian man, great worthiness, fairness, and riches. For there can be no greater worthiness than to be the son of so great a Lord as almighty God is. Therefore Bede saith, No reward may be greater than for the sons of earthly men to be made the sons of the highest Lord—greater riches may no man have, than to be heir of the realm of heaven; which riches each man shall have, that liveth and endeth in the lore and teaching of this noble Father, as St. Paul witnesses. Greater fairness can no man have, than to be like to this Father. The more man loveth this Father, the more like he is to him; and ever the less man loveth him, the less he hath of his likeness. This likeness is likeness of soul, through virtuous life.

If thou wilt be son of this blessed Father, thou must hate all sin and filth, as he doth; and love all goodness and virtue, as he doth. Now when thou callest him Father, bethink thee that thou be obedient to his commands, and yield to him love, worship, reverence, service, and dread. And if thou desirest to find him a mild Father, be thou to him an obedient son. No man shall say, Father mine, but only he that is son by nature, without beginning and ending, as Christ, God's Son is. We are not his sons, save as we are made to his likeness. But we are his sons through grace, and by adoption or purchase; as a lord having no son of his own to be his heir, may make a poor man's son his heir. Thus this Lord and Emperor, when we were poor, and children of wrath and hell, as St. Paul saith, made us through grace, heirs of the realm of heaven, if we are obedient children to him.

We exclude pride when we say, Our Father, and not mine. This word "our" saith that we are all brethren,

great and small, poor and rich, high and low, of one father, and of one mother, that is, God and holy church; and that none scorn or despise another, but love as his brother, and one should help another, as limbs of a man's body, as St. Paul saith.

Truth it is that God is every where, but most properly he is said to be in heaven, for there he is most known, loved, and worshipped. And next to that he is said to be in heaven in a spiritual sense; that is, in holy souls, which are the temple of God, as St. Paul saith, and are reared on high from sin and earthly love, and are bright and clean as the heavens. For in such souls he is seen, known, dreaded, worshipped, and loved.

Hallowed be thy name.—That is, in us. We hallow God in us, as St. John Chrysostom saith, when we, knowing him to be holy, dread him, and watch busily, lest we defile the holiness of his name in us, by our evil works. This, saith he, this desire we should evermore have, that this name which is blessed, be confirmed in us, making us blessed and holy. Thy name, that is, thy faith, thy acknowledging, and thy love, be confirmed in our hearts, that as we bear thy name, so thy acknowledging and thy love may be hallowed in us, that we be made by thy help, righteous, and abstaining from all evil.

The name of God in itself cannot be more holy than it is, but ever the more it is known, loved, and worshipped of man, the more it is said to be holy. Therefore, sweet Father that art in heavens, thy name be hallowed in the hearts of heathen men, that they may believe in thee; and in the hearts of Jews, that they may believe more perfectly, and also love thee. Hallowed be thy name in the hearts of false christian men, that as they believe in thee so they may have perfect love and good works, without which, belief may not save any man, as the apostle saith. Also, O Father that art in heaven, thy name be hallowed in the hearts of thy chosen men, by more increase of charity, and knowledge of thee, and by more sweetness of heavenly love.

In the first asking of this holy prayer, we pray for the first and principal gift of the Holy Ghost, that is, the gift of wisdom, which binds and holds together the heart in God. This Spirit of wisdom hallows the heart, cleansing it from earthly love and fleshly affections, drawing it from many things, and setting it to one alone, that is, to God. Therefore, sweet Father, thy name be hallowed in us; that is,

give thou to us the Spirit of wisdom, by whom we may be made clean from all filth; by whom we may be full filled with thy love, that all other loves, contrary to thine, may be bitter to us.

II. The second asking of this holy prayer, which in some measure pertains to the Son, is said in these words, *Thy kingdom come to thee.* Since Christ (who is that nobleman of whom the gospel speaketh, Luke xix.) came down from high heaven into this wretched world, to take us for his kingdom who before were lost through Adam's sin; and since he suffered bitter death upon a tree, and bought man again with his precious blood, and after that returned again to his Father, for the salvation of mankind—well may true christian people be called God's kingdom. And therefore, as St. Jerome saith, we here pray generally for the realm of all the world, that the devil may cease to reign therein, or that God reign in each man by grace, and that sin reign not in the mortal body of man. St. John Chrysostom saith, that holy men are called the kingdom of God, and wicked men are called the kingdom of the devil, for he reigneth in them, and they do his will. Therefore, a faithful christian man prayeth of God his Father, that sin, which is the realm of the fiend, may be destroyed, and Christ reign in souls through mercy and grace. And that, as he reigneth in souls of well living men, so also, by turning to good life, and putting away of sin, he would reign in them that still are evil.

Also Christ teacheth us in this prayer to ask the dreadful time of doom, in which the kingdom of God shall fully come; that men may know it behoves them not to live idly or negligently, that this time may not make ready flames and vengeance for them, but to live justly and soberly, that this time bring a crown to them. Here we ask of God, the second gift of the Holy Ghost, that is, the Spirit of understanding in our hearts. For as the sun doeth away the darkness, and wasteth away the clouds and the morning dews, so the Spirit of understanding wasteth all the darkness of the heart, and showeth him his sins and defaults. So that he who thought before that he had been all clean, then findeth many faults, and defilements without number, as the sun-beam showeth motes and dust to them that behold it.

This asking is said thus; Fair Father, if it be thy will,

enlighten our hearts with the Holy Ghost, and cleanse them and make them fair, that we may be made worthy to see God, and that he deign to reign in us; so that all be his, and he King, and that we may evermore see him. For that it is for us to live without end, and to be the kingdom of God. And as we are taught in the first asking, to restrain the sin of pride by true meekness, when we say, "Our Father," and not "mine," even so we are taught in the second asking to restrain envy against our fellow christian by true charity,* when we say, Thy kingdom come to thee. Merciful Father, vouchsafe to reign in our souls, as a king in his realm, governing us all our lives, that we may reign with thee in bliss without end.

III. The third asking of this holy prayer, which hath some respect to the Holy Ghost, the third person of the holy Trinity, follows in these words, *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.* Here we pray to God, that his will be done and fulfilled here in earth, among sinful men, by amending their life, as it is done in just men, who spiritually are said to be heaven. For God dwelleth in just souls, as it is written, The soul of a just and well living man, is the seat of wisdom, that is of Christ, for he is the wisdom of the Father of heaven. Here we pray also, that our flesh withstand not our spirit, nor hinder it to do God's will. For the spirit desireth contrary to the flesh, and the flesh to the spirit, as St. Paul saith.

Here we pray that God's will be done, that is, as St. Augustine saith, that men obey God's commandments, as angels in heaven obey his commandments, so also that men in earth may obey the same; and as angels serve him in heaven without blame, so also may men serve him in earth. Here we pray God that he quicken our hearts with grace, that we may do his will on earth, as saints do in heaven. Let every man that sayeth this prayer, look that he do in his living; that as he sayeth in word, that God's will be done in him as it is in heaven, so also that his works accord therewith. For God looketh more to the deeds than to words of mouth. For if the words of thy mouth pray God that his will be fulfilled in thee, and thy works say, Nay, through sin contained in them, or through grudgings against him in sickness or in other diseases, thou obtainest nothing of God in thy prayer.

* Love.

Here we ask of our Father of heaven the third gift of the Holy Ghost, that is, the gift of counsel—that our wretched will, through counsel of the Holy Ghost, be set fully to do God's will, so that in us, our own understanding or will be not master, but his only. As we are taught in the first and second askings to restrain pride and envy through meekness and charity, so we are taught in this third asking, to restrain wrath with true love of heart. And therefore Christ saith, I give to you a new commandment, that ye love each other, as I have loved you.

IV. In the last four askings of this holy prayer, we pray our heavenly Father, to give us, forgive us, keep us, and deliver us. And unless we have these four, we are dead and ruined in this world. And therefore we say to our Father, *Our each day's bread, give thou us to day.* Christ saith, Our each day's bread; to restrain lustful meats; that a man eat so much as reason asks, not how much fleshly lust covets. Here we pray for no lordships or riches of this world, but only for needful sustenance, which is understood by bread. Thus prayed the wise man, who was inspired with the Holy Ghost, saying, Beggary and riches, Lord, give thou not to me, but only sustenance; grant thou necessaries. In this asking, covetousness is put under. For here a christian man prayeth by largeness of heart, that God would give these necessaries which are understood by bread, to other men, as well as to him. And since each man, every day hath need of spiritual sustenance of soul, and also of body, therefore these necessaries may well be called our each day's bread. And as man's body is strengthened by bodily sustenance, that it fail not in travail, so man's soul is strengthened by God's word when it is rooted therein, that it fail not from the love of God, in tribulations, or in any anguish.

And therefore, we here ask of our heavenly Father the fourth gift of the Holy Spirit, that is, the gift of strength, which armeth God's knight,* and maketh his soul hardy and strong to suffer divers diseases for God's love. And as the soul passeth the body in worthiness, so this food of the soul passes bodily food. And if he were a cursed man that withheld bodily bread from his brother after the flesh, when he saw him about to perish, how much more are

* The soldier of Christ.

they accursed, who should feed souls that are on the point of perishing with God's word, and do not. And since this, which is the true food for the soul, hath been withdrawn for many days, through pride, covetousness, ignorance, and lustful living of those who should be teachers, and through unwholesome lore, and leasings* of covetous flatterers, therefore let us pray heartily to Jesus Christ, the true bishop of our souls, that he ordain true teachers for his people, to break to them the bread of God's word, and to warn them of their sins, telling them the very truth of God. And that He who inspired the holy prophets with knowledge and wisdom, and taught the apostles the way of all truth, may enlighten our hearts with understanding of his lore, and grant us grace to work thereafter. And as we each day need this food of body and of soul, therefore let us meekly pray our heavenly Father that he give us our each day's bread to day.

V. The fifth is said in these words, *And forgive thou us our debts, as we forgive to our debtors.* By this wise instruction of Jesus Christ, malicious and revengeful wretches may know that they are in the way to hell as long as they dwell in their accursed malice. For by these debts are understood sins which we do against God. And as we sin each day, therefore each day we need to pray to God for forgiveness of our sins. Therefore, St. Cyprian saith, He that is commanded to pray each day for sins, is taught that he sinneth each day. Our Father teacheth us to ask forgiveness of our sins which we have done against him; upon this condition he forgiveth all that we have trespassed against him, that we forgive all others that have trespassed against us. And therefore he that beareth wrath, or desireth vengeance against his fellow christian, in this prayer prayeth God to take vengeance upon himself, as he doth, or as it in his will to do upon his fellow christian. St. John Chrysostom saith, "He that keepeth enmity against any man, lieth when he saith this prayer; for he saith, I forgive, and he forgiveth not; and so he asks forgiveness of God, and it shall not be forgiven to him."

It is not need for thee to forgive debts to each debtor of money, only to him that cannot pay. To him that will not pay, but chides and makes open debate, if thou doest mildly and easily, that money due to thee may be yielded

* Lies.

to thee, proposing not so much the winning of money as the amending him that hath whereof to pay; then not only thou shalt do no sin, but thou shalt profit that man.

St. Augustine saith, "Each sinful man is in great debt to God, which debt he is not able to pay. For though a man should live ever so long, he might not do sufficient penance for one deadly sin, if God used him strait and not in merciful judgment."*

But take good heed how thou sayest this prayer, when thou sayest, Forgive us our misdeeds as we forgive them that have trespassed to us. If one member of thy body chance to hurt another, he that is hurt revengeth not himself therefore. We are members of Jesus Christ, if we are true christian men, as the apostle saith. Therefore we should love each other, and those who do not so are manslayers, and condemn themselves, as holy writ saith.

In this prayer we ask of God a gift of the Holy Ghost, that is called a gift of knowledge, and which maketh a man to bethink himself well, and to be wise in soul. The Spirit showeth to man what he is, and what peril he is in, and when so he came, and whither he goeth, and what he hath done, and what he hath lost, and what he should have done. And when he seeth that he hath not whereof to make good for his sins against God, then this Spirit maketh him weep and lament, and cry mercy of God; and to cast away ire and wrath, and all other such; and to hold himself the foulest and worst of all others. For this Spirit teacheth man what pain and sorrow Christ suffered for him, and in whom never was spot of sin; how he sweat blood and water, how he was bound to a pillar and wounded from the head to the feet; how he was crowned with thorns, how he was nailed hand and foot, and his heart opened with a spear. And yet in all these hideous pains, as a sheep under the hand of his shearer, he was still without murmuring, as the prophet said of him. And he meekly prayed to his Father for his enemies, saying, Father forgive them their guilt, for they know not what they do. This should move all christian men to forgive all trespasses, and to pray meekly, both for enemies and for friends, saying, Fair Father, forgive us our sins, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

* This plainly shows that by penance Wickliff meant scriptural repentance, not the bodily penances of the church of Rome.

VI. The sixth asking follows in these words, *And lead us not into temptation.* We pray not that we be not tempted, for no man can be proved without temptation; but we pray that God lead us not into temptation, that is, that he suffer us not to fall into such temptations as we may not suffer. For God, by himself, leadeth no man into temptation, but he suffereth him to be led whom he forsaketh from his help, as St. Augustine saith.

Temptation profits much to man that withstandeth; for a man that is not tempted is not known, either to himself, or to others, whether he is good or evil. But when he is assayed and tempted, then it shall be known what he is. And therefore, St. Gregory saith, that in time of ease, when man is not tempted, it is not known which is a good man, which is evil.

Also temptation that is withstood, increases man's merit in bliss, and therefore saith the Holy Ghost by St. James, That man is blessed that suffers temptation, for when he is proved true in withstanding sin, he shall receive a crown of life, which God hath promised to all those that love him. He is led into temptation, who, through his own unkindness and evil living, is left from the grace and help of God; for such a one shall fall with each blast of his enemy. And therefore, in this prayer we beseech our heavenly Father, since he is true and suffers no man to be tempted more than he may withstand, as the apostle saith, that he, through help and grace of the Spirit of pity, keep our hearts in temptation, that we consent not to any sin. And as we prayed him, in that other asking, that he forgive our before-done sins, so we pray him here, that he keep us from consenting to sins that are to come hereafter, that we fall not again.

Temptation makes a good man more meek and fearful, and makes him to know himself and his frailness; and it makes him to know the strength of his enemies, and their sleights; and how true God is at need, to help his servants. Here we are taught to subdue sloth, and to be busy to purchase help of God, by devout prayer; to withstand sin in time of temptation; and to keep from fleshly lusts that bring men to many great sins. For our fighting is as nought without his help. Each temptation that man hath, cometh to him by some thought and enticing of one of his spiritual enemies, either of the flesh, of the world, or of the fiend. Therefore let each man examine

the thoughts and enticings that come into his heart, and espy whether they will draw him into any sin, or unlawful lust or liking. And if they are thereabout, turn he his thought from them, and meditate upon the bitter pains, sufferings, and wounds, in hands, head, and body, feet and side, which Christ suffered to wash us from our sins. And cease he not to pray devoutly, having his heart and thought upon Christ, and upon his peculiar pains, till his temptation pass away. For temptation overcomes not the man that hath stedfast mind upon Christ and his pains. No man shall be crowned in bliss but he that overcometh, as St. Paul saith, and no man can overcome unless he have something against which he shall fight. Therefore whoso is tempted, be he true in fighting, so shall he overcome, and win a seat in bliss with Christ, and have a crown of life that never shall fade, which is promised of God to all them that truly fight, withstanding sin and unlawful likings, as it is written in the book of Revelation.

When we feel no temptation, let us humble ourselves the more to God, for he knoweth our frailness, and defends us. And if we are proud, or have vain glory thereof, he withdraweth his help, and therefore we perish. Also we should be afraid when we feel no temptation, lest the reason of our souls be dead through some secret deceit. For St. Gregory saith, that a man is most tempted when he least feels temptation. Therefore pray we heartily to God, that he suffer us not to be overcome in temptation.

VII. *But* that he through his great mercy *deliver us from all evil.* For this is the last prayer of the paternoster. Here we pray God to deliver us from the evil of pain which we have deserved through sin before done, and from the evil of sin at the present time of our life, and from the evil of pain that shall come for sin after this life. Here also we seek deliverance of all evils of body, which either hinder, or will hinder, the soul from serving God. St. John Chrysostom saith, that Christ here calleth "evil" the fiend, for the abundance of his malice. This malice is not naturally, but of free choice, and because he hath enmity towards us which may not be appeased. Therefore Christ said, Deliver us from evil, that we be delivered from sin and from the fiend. No man is truly delivered from sin unless God deliver him.

But the worst sin of all, is sin against the Holy Ghost for as Christ saith, that shall not be forgiven. Therefore especially let us pray to God, to deliver us from this evil That man sinneth against the Holy Ghost, who to his life's end, is a rebel against God, and so dieth in despair and goeth to pain for ever. And he is a rebel against God, who rebels against his commandments. And therefore Christ saith, He that is not with him is against him And in another place he saith, He that loveth not me keepeth not my words. And thus every man who is contrary to Christ's teaching is a rebel against God, and loveth him not. For he saith himself, that whoso loveth him shall keep his word. And the wise man saith, He that turneth away his ear, that he hear not God's word, his prayer shall be accursed, and St. Paul saith, He is cursed that loveth not Jesus Christ. Therefore pray we to God that he deliver us from this evil will, and rebellion against his word, and from all other evils.

Amen.

Amen, that is, So be it. This word knitteth together all the prayers that went before, as if it were said, Sweet Father, that art in heaven, be all these things that we have asked, fulfilled in us and in all others. Here we ask for the Spirit of the holy fear of God, through which we may withstand all the evil of sin. And therefore saith the Holy Ghost, The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God And in another place it is written, that through the fear of God each man turneth from evil; that is, each man who truly feareth God, fleeth from sin.

There is much more understood in this holy prayer than is declared here. For St. Augustine saith, that whatever is found in all the words of holy prayers, is contained in this prayer of the Lord. And therefore, let each man that thinketh to be saved do his utmost to love God above all things, and his fellow christian as himself, and so he shall be made worthy to be heard of God in his prayer and to be delivered from all evil, and to come to everlasting rest of bliss. Thither may He bring us, who bought man with his heart's blood. Amen.

OF PERFECT LIFE;

OR,

THE COUNSEL OF CHRIST.

Christ, not compelling, but freely counselling each man to perfect life, saith thus, If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take his cross and follow me, Luke ix. Then let us forsake ourselves, such as we have made us in doing sin, and dwell we such as we are made by grace. If a proud man be converted to Christ, and is made meek, he hath forsaken himself. If a covetous man ceaseth to covet, and giveth his own things, he hath denied himself. If an evil liver changeth his life, he hath denied himself. The cross of Christ is taken when despisings for the love of truth are not forsaken, but taken;—when the flesh is punished by abstinence, and when compassion and pity towards our neighbour is truly kept; when man is crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him, setting the joy thereof at nought. (Wickliff enforces these doctrines by further arguments very similar to those which he has used in other pieces, and proceeds,)—

But let us not make so sure of the Lord's mercy, that we heap sins upon sins; neither say we while youth endureth, Let us follow our desires, and at the last, in age do penance for our sins, for the Lord is merciful, he shall not have mind of our sins.—Lord Jesus, turn us to thee, and then we shall be turned. Heal thou us, and we shall be truly whole. For without thy grace and help no man may be truly turned or healed. For they are but scorners who to-day turn to God, and to-morrow turn away. What is turning to God? None but turning from the world, from sin, and from the fiend. What is turning from God? None but turning to the changeable goods of this world, to pleasing likeness of creatures, to works of the fiend, and to lusts of the flesh. To be turned from the world, is to set at nought, and to put out of mind, all likings, joys, and mirths thereof, and to suffer meekly all bitterness, slanders, and troubles thereof, for the love of

Christ; and to leave all occupations unlawful and unprofitable to the soul, so that man's will and thought be dead to seek any thing that the world seeketh and loveth.

Therefore the prophet speaketh in the person of souls perfectly turning to God, saying, Mine eyes, that is, my thought and intent, shall ever be to God. For he shall draw my feet, that is my soul and my affections, out of the snare, and the net of the love of this world. He that is truly turned to God, fleeth from vices, beholdeth not the solaces or comforts of this world; but setteth his mind so stedfastly on God, that he well nigh forgetteth all outward things; he gathereth himself all within; he is reared up wholly into Christ.

Those that will turn truly to Christ must flee occasions, words, sights, and deeds, exciting to sin. For when the fiend seeth one among a hundred who withstandeth his enticings, and turneth to God, and followeth the steps of Christ, by virtues, despising the joys of this present life, and seeking to love everlasting heavenly things, he findeth a thousand frauds to beguile and trouble, and a thousand manner of temptations to cast him down from God's love to the love of the world. And he beginneth at the least, that by foul thoughts he make him to be foul towards God. He bringeth to man's mind the lusts which he hath used before, and telleth to his thought that he may not leave all his worldly and fleshly likings; and saith, It is too hard for a man to put himself from all present mirth. He stirreth up fantasies, and vain thoughts innumerable, and unprofitable affections which before were asleep.

The fiend reareth against such a soul, slanders, backbitings, persecutions, tribulations, false challenges, false accusings of divers sins, and divers manner of hates. One time he tempteth by sharp outward diseases; another time by false glosings and likings, and so forth. He calleth again to mind delight in things loved before. He enflameth the heart and the flesh with foul burnings. He beginneth by small enticings, and pursues to the greatest flame of wickedness. And he studieth thus busily to blow against us all manner of temptations and tribulations, by how much he seeth that by the mercy of God we are escaped out of his power. For he seeketh nothing so much as to separate a man from the holy and everlasting love of Jesus Christ, and to make him love failing things and uncleanness of this world.

OF TEMPTATION;

OR,

OF VIRTUOUS PATIENCE.

HE that is truly fed with the bread that came down from heaven, boweth not his love to those things to which the fiend enticeth. Temptations are overcome by patience and meek suffering. What is patience?—a glad and willing suffering of troubles. He that is patient, murmurs not at adversity, but rather, at all times, praises God with the prophet.

Evil men always grudge in adversities, and flee them as much as they may. For while they are unmeasurably given to visible things, they are deprived from true hope of everlasting things. They find solace or comfort only in earthly goods, for they have lost the savour of heavenly things. There is no soul of man in this world which cleaveth not either to the Creator or the creature. If he love the creature he loseth God, and goeth to death with that which he loveth. Such love in the beginning is travail and folly, in the middle it is languor and wretchedness, and in the end it is hate and pain. He that truly loveth his Maker, refuses in will and liking all things that are in the world. He hath sweetness to speak of him and with him; to think upon his Maker is refreshing to him. He closes his outer senses lest death enter in by the windows, lest he be occupied unprofitably with any vanity. Sometimes there are reared against him despisings, reproofs, scorns, and slanders. Therefore it is needful that he take the shield of patience, and be ready to forget and to forgive all wrongs, and to pray for the turning to good of them that hate him and hurt him. No man is showed to himself whether he be strong or feeble, unless he be tempted when he is at peace. Many men seem to be patient when they are not impugned, but when a light blast, I say not of injustice, but of correction, touches them, their mind presently turns into bitterness and wrath, and if they hear one word against their will, they yield two more sternly again. Into their council come not, O my soul! The darts of the enemy are to be quenched with the meekness and sweetness of the love of Christ. Give not way to

temptation, be it ever so grievous. For the greater the battle the more glorious the victory, and the higher the crown. Blessed is the man that suffereth temptation, for when he is proved to be true, he shall take a crown of life. Flee as much as thou canst the praising of men. Despise favour, worship, and all vain glory, and gladly sustain or suffer enmities, hates, backbitings, or reproofs. And so by evil fame, and by good praise; by tribulations and gladnesses, cease thou not to press forward to heavenly kingdoms.

When thou art tempted or troubled, think upon the remedy that our Saviour saith in his gospel, Watch ye and pray ye, that ye enter not into temptation. He saith not, Pray ye that ye be not tempted. For it is good and profitable to good men to be tempted and troubled, as is shown by what the prophet saith, To him that is tempted and troubled, God saith, I am with him in tribulation; I shall deliver him, and shall glorify him. Let no man think himself to be holy because he is not tempted, for the holiest and highest in life have the most temptations. How much the higher a hill is, so much is the wind there greater; so, how much higher the life is, so much stronger is the temptation of the enemy. God playeth with his child when he suffereth him to be tempted, as a mother rises from her much beloved child, and hides herself, and leaves him alone, and suffers him to cry, Mother, mother, so that he looks about, cries and weeps for a time, and at last when the child is ready to be overset with troubles and weeping, she comes again, clasps him in her arms, and kisses him, and wipes away the tears. So our Lord suffereth his loved child to be tempted and troubled for a time, and withdraweth some of his solace and full protection, to see what his child will do; and when he is about to be overcome by temptations, then he defendeth him, and comforteth him with his grace. And therefore, when we are tempted, let us cry for the help of our Father, as a child cries after the comfort of its mother. For whoso prayeth devoutly, shall have help oft to pray, and profits much to establish the heart in God, and suffers it not to bow about, now into this, and now into that. The fiend is overcome by busy and devout prayer, and becomes as feeble and without strength to them that are strong and persevering in devout prayers. Devout prayer of a holy soul, is as sweet incense which driveth away all evil savours, and enters up by odour of sweetness into the presence of God.

THE

CHARTER OF OUR HEAVENLY HERITAGE.

EVERY wise man that claims his heritage, asks great pardon, keeps busily, and oft has mind upon the charter of his challenge.* Therefore, let each man learn to live virtuously, and keep, and have mind upon the charter of heaven's bliss, and study stedfastly the meaning of this decree, for the pardon thereof shall endure without end.

Understand well that the charter of this heritage, and the bull† of this everlasting pardon, is OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, written with all the might and virtue of God.

The parchment of this heavenly charter is neither of sheep nor of calf, but it is of the body of our Lord Jesus, a lamb that never was spotted with spot of sin. And there never was skin of sheep or of calf so sorely and so hard strained upon the tenter or harrow of any parchment maker, as the blessed body of our Lord Jesus Christ, for our love, was strained and drawn upon the cross. No man ever heard from the beginning of the world until now, nor shall hear from hence to doomsday, that a writer ever wrote upon sheep skin or upon calf-skin, with such hard and hideous pens, so bitterly, so sorely, and so deeply, as the accursed Jews wrote upon the blessed body of our Lord Jesus Christ, with hard nails, sharp spear, and sore pricking thorns, instead of their pens. They wrote so sorely and so deep, that they pierced his hands and feet with hard nails. They opened his heart with a sharp spear. They pressed upon his head a crown of sharp thorns. The wounds upon that blessed body are the letters with which our charter was written, by which we may claim our heritage, if we live rightly, and keep the charter stedfastly in mind.

The sentence and understanding written within and without this blessed charter, and body of Jesus Christ, is our belief. For he is the coffer, in whom is inclosed and locked all this treasure of knowledge, and wisdom of God. Upon this blessed charter was written wailing, or mourning, and sorrow. Wailing or mourning for sorrow of our sins—for the

* The title to what he claims. † The infallible decree.

which to be healed and washed away, Christ, God and man, must suffer such hard and painful wounds. Upon Christ's body, that is our heavenly charter, was written joy and singing, to all those that perfectly forsake their sins. For they have full medicine and help, by virtue of the bitter wounds and precious blood of Jesus. And upon the wounds of Jesus, may be read sorrow to all them that for false liking, and lust which endureth but a while, bind themselves to sin and serving of the fiend, and lose the help of the heavenly charter, and so lose their heritage, and go blindly to sorrow that endureth for ever.

The laces* of this heavenly charter are the promises of God; and that God may not lie, for he is sovereign truth. The first, is his promise, that what day or hour a sinful man or woman leave their sin, wholly, and heartily, with bitter sorrow, and turn them to him, he shall receive them to his mercy. But let each man beware that he tarry not too long, lest for his unkindness, grace be taken from him. The second, is the full trust we have that God may not lie, neither be false of his promise. And herein depends surely our trust of our heritage. By these two hang the seal of our charter, sealed with the blood of the Lamb, even Christ. That is Christ's flesh taken of the virgin Mary, more marvellously, than ever any bee engendered the wax of flowers of the field.

The print of this seal is the form of our Lord Jesus hanging for our sin on the cross. He hath his head bowed down, ready to kiss all those that truly turn to him. He hath his arms spread abroad, ready to embrace them. He is nailed fast, hand and foot, to the cross, for he will dwell with them, and never go away from man, but man forsook him first through sin. He hath all his body spread abroad, to give himself wholly to us, cleaving to him, and he hath his side opened, and his heart cloven for our sake, so that without hinderance we may creep into Christ's heart, and rest there by stedfast belief and hearty love.

This charter no fire can burn, nor water drown, nor thief rob, nor any creature destroy. For this scripture the Father of heaven hath hallowed or made stedfast, and sent it into the world, which scripture may not be undone, as the gospel witnesses. This scripture is OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, the charter of our heritage of heaven. Lock not

* The strings by which the seal is appended to a charter.

this charter in thy coffer, but set it, or write it in thine heart, and none of the creatures, either in heaven, or on earth, or in hell, can steal it, or bereave it from thee; but if thou govern thyself from assenting to sin, and keepest well this charter in the coffer of thine heart with good living and devout love, lasting to thine end—as trustily and truly as he is true God, by virtue of this charter, thou shalt have thine heritage of bliss, enduring without end.

Therefore, haste we to repentance, as Augustine bids, and let the last day be often before our eyes. Refrain we our bodies from vices and evil covetings, and ever let our heart think heavenly things, that when we shall come thither we may fully use heavenly goods. For why? We believe that when our soul shall be unknit from the bond of flesh, if we have lived well and rightly before God, the companies of angels shall bring us to worship the true Doomsman.*

If we live, as I said, and do those things that are pleasing to God, then peace shall be our compass† and security. Then we shall not dread the fiery darts of the devil, nor any manner of enemy that desires to hurt our souls. The flesh shall no more be adversary to the spirit, nor shall we dread any perils. Then the Holy Ghost shall give to us a dwelling in heavenly things, and we, glad and joyful, shall abide the day of doom to come, in which the souls of all men shall receive for their deeds. Then sinners and unpiteous men shall perish. Ravenous and greedy men, proud men and adulterers, wrathful and covetous men, cursers and forsworn men, in vain shall weep most bitterly, and shall not get forgiveness of their evils, who left not their sins with bitter sorrow in their life. In most wailing shall they behold, who serve unlawful lusts of their flesh. And they shall be in mourning and everlasting sorrow who served vices and unreasonable desires. And when all these shall deserve to be sentenced to the fire of hell for their sins and their great trespasses, so, if we please God while we are here in body, we shall have everlasting reward with saints. Therefore let us despise all things that are vain and failing, that we may receive great glory of Christ, doing mercy. Therefore turn we away from vices and go we to virtues, nor let superfluous words come out of our mouths, for we shall yield reckoning for idle words in the day of doom. Neither accustom we our tongues to curse any man; which tongues are formed to bless and praise

* Judge. † A circle around us.

God in all things. Whatever is unmeasured,* maketh dissolution of the soul, and negligence concerning the Lord's commands. Neither does he readily call his trespass to mind, and so, forgetting himself, he stirs not himself to penance, and so by little and little he goes from goodness, and he shall not have true compunction of heart where unlawful covetings dwell. But where sorrow shall truly be, the spiritual fire is kindled, which lighteth the inward parts of the soul and showeth to it heavenly things.

Therefore, use thou the fellowship of perfect men, and turn not away thine ears from their words. For the words of men that fear God, are words of life and holiness of soul to them that hear and perceive them. As the sun rising, driveth away the mist, so the teaching of holy men casteth away the darkness from our hearts.

I beseech you, shun proud men, envious men, backbiters, liars, forsworn men, and men despising their salvation, who are dead to virtues, and joy in their own lusts, and want God's joy. I speak not only of those that are in thy house, but wherever thou shalt hear such, shun them, and come thou not with such men if thou canst not dissuade them from their error. For by one sickly sheep all the flock is defiled, and a little portion of gall turns much sweetness into bitterness. For though a man seem to thee clean in clothing, and noble in bringing forth sweet words, nevertheless if he doeth the contrary works, his feignings hurt more than his figure or his words can please.

And every work that thou thinkest to do, first think thou in God, and examine diligently if that thou thinkest is of God; and if it be rightful before God, perform it, or else cut it away from thy soul. And likewise be aware of each wickedness and sin, in word and deed, in thought, in hands, in feet, in sight, and in hearing, and keep we our body and our soul.

For Jesus Christ our Lord God, the Son of God the Father, that came down from heaven to earth, he was lifted up on the cross, and died for us sinners, to deliver us from the tormenting of the devil. He suffered pain to deliver us from everlasting pain. He suffered death to deliver us from death. He again arose from death, that we should again rise in body and soul in the last day of the great doom. And therefore it is said of the first church, that one heart, one will, and one soul is in them to the Lord. For the charity and love of Christ hath

* Beyond moderation.

joined them in one; and so must all christian men and women if they will be saved. But fleshly men and women, and lovers of this world, are parted against themselves and separated, moving slanders each to the other, strifes, wraths, chidings, dissensions, manslaughters, forswearings, thefts, rapines, licentiousness, drunkenness, and all things which the world and the flesh loveth; according to what the apostle saith, He that soweth to the flesh shall reap corruption. In such flesh it is that the devil soweth his seed. Our flesh indeed would ever be mighty in malice, but in abstinence and fastings, watchings and prayers, and good works, it feigns itself to be sick. But the flesh coveteth, and it ever showeth evil enticing. The flesh stirreth venomous doings, the flesh calleth for wrath, the flesh stirreth murder, the flesh stirreth adultery, the flesh sitteth in drunkenness, the flesh coveteth all of this world, and the flesh desireth all evils.

Oh, thou wretched flesh! not only thou slayest thyself, but also the soul. Thine own loss suffices thee not, but also thou desirest that thy soul be drowned in hell. Wo to thee, soul, which hast taken the flesh contrary to thee, which neither entereth nor suffereth thee to enter into the kingdom of God. Wherefore, as Christ saith, it behoveth to wake and to pray, Lord, make thou my soul to have glory in THEE; that vain glory and boasting come not out of me; but that the bitterness of sin be assuaged.

Also, Lord, give me grace to hold righteousness in all things; spiritual hardiness and temperance, and make simpleness to be prudent within me, that I lead cleanly blessed life, and prudently flee evil. And that I may understand the treacherous and deceitful falseness of the devil, lest he beguile me under the likeness of goodness, make me mild, well-willing, peaceable, courteous, and temperate, and to accord goodness without feigning, unto all. And make me stedfast and strong, in wakings, in fastings, in prayers. And also, Lord, give thou to me, to act in mildness, that I be silent in words, that I speak what beseemeth, and that I speak not that which it is not right to speak. Give me grace to keep the faith unspotted without any errors, and that my works henceforth be worthy. All this sentence saith Augustine.

THE ARMOUR OF HEAVEN,

OR,

OF GHOSTLY BATTLE.*

ALMIGHTY God saith by holy Job, that all man's life upon earth is fighting, that is battle against spiritual enemies and sin. St. Paul saith, Clothe yourselves in the armour of God, that ye may stiffly stand against temptations and deceits of the fiend. Man's body is as a cloth with which his soul is hid; and as a horse that bears his master through many perils. And to this horse, that is, man's body, belong many things, if he will bear his master aright out of perils. For no knight can securely fight against his enemy, unless his horse be obedient to him; no more can the soul fight against the wiles of the fiend, if the flesh, which is his horse, live in lusts and likings at his own will.

For holy writ saith, He that nourisheth his servant, that is, his body, delicately or lustfully, shall find him rebel when he least expecteth. As soon as man begins to live wisely, and flees divers lusts and likings, and vanities, which he before used and loved, and bows himself under the yoke of God's holy doctrine, then his enemies begin to contrive by wiles, frauds, and temptations, to make him fall. And therefore it is needful that his horse be meek, and helping his master to overcome his enemies. For if the soul and the body be well agreed together, and either of them helps the other in this spiritual contest, the fiend shall soon flee and be overcome. For holy scripture saith, Withstand ye the fiend, and he shall flee from you.

But it were great folly for any man to fight upon an unbridled horse, and if the horse be wild and ill taught, the bridle must be heavy, and the bit sharp, to hold him again. And if the horse be easy and obedient to his master, his bridle shall be light and smooth also. This bridle is called abstinence, with which the flesh shall be restrained, that he have not all his will, for he is wild and wilful, and loth to bow to goodness. With this bridle his master shall restrain him, to be meek and bow to his will. For if he will fight without a bridle upon him, it is impossible but that he fall.

* The spiritual contest.

But this bridle of abstinence should be led by wisdom, so that nature be holden by strength, and the wildness of the flesh be restrained by this bridle. For else his horse will fail at the greatest need, and harm his master, and make him lose his victory.

This bridle must have two strong reins, by which thou mayest direct thy horse at thy will; also they must be even, and neither pass the other in length. For if thou drawest one faster than the other, thy horse will glide aside, and go out of his way. Therefore, if thy horse shall hold the even way, it behoves thee to draw the reins of thy bridle even. The one rein of thy bridle is too loose, when thou sufferest thy flesh to have his will too much, in eating and drinking, in speaking, in sleeping, in idle standing or sitting, and vain tale telling, and all other things that the flesh desires beyond measure and reason. The other rein of the bridle is held too strait when thou art too stern against thine own flesh, and withdrawest from it that which reason would that it should have. Whoso straineth either of these reins uneven, will make his horse glide aside and lose his right way. If thou sufferest thy flesh to have its full liking, he that should be thy friend becomes thy decided foe. If thou withholdest therefrom that which it ought to have to sustain its nature, as its need requires, then thou destroyest its strength and its might, so that to help thee as it should it may not. Therefore sustain thy horse, that he faint not, nor fail at thy need. And withdraw from him that which might turn thee to folly.

Yet thy horse needs to have a saddle, to sit upon him the more stedfastly, and seemly to other men's sight. This saddle is mansuetude* or easiness. That is, whatsoever thou doest, be it done with good consideration; wisely thinking of the beginning and the ending, and what may fall thereof; and that it be done sweetly and meekly, and with mild semblance. That is, that thou mildly suffer slanders and scorns, and other harms that men do against thee, and neither grieve thyself in word nor in deed. And though thy flesh be aggrieved, keep mildness in heart, and let not any wicked words out of thy mouth or tongue, and then thou shalt be made glad. As the prophet saith, The mild and the meekly suffering shall joy for ever, who do mildly, with easiness and love, whatsoever they do; that their outward and inward semblance and cheer, be so mild

* Mildness or gentleness.

and lovely in word and deed, that others may be turned to good by their example. This virtue, which is called mansuetude—that is, mildness of heart and of appearance—makes man gracious to God, and seemly to man's sight, as a saddle makes a horse seemly and praiseable.

Two spurs it is needful that thou have to thy horse, and that they be sharp to prick thy horse if needful, that he loiter not in his way; for many horses are slow if they be not spurred. These two spurs are love and dread; which of all things most stir men to the way of heaven. The right spur is the love that God's dear children have for the lasting weal that shall never end. The left spur is dread of the pains of purgatory* and of hell, which are without number, and never may be told out. With these two spurs prick thy horse if he be dull and unwilling to stir himself to good. And if the right spur of love be not sharp enough to make him go forward on his journey, prick him with the left spur of dread to rouse him.

Separate thy soul from thy body by inward thought, and send thy heart before, into that other land; and do as a man would do that of two dwelling places must choose one, into which when he had once entered he must dwell world without end. Certainly, if he were wise, he would send before some of his near friends to see what these places were. Two places are ordained for man to dwell in after this life. While he is here, he may choose, by God's mercy, which he will; but if he be once gone hence, he may not do so. For whithersoever he first cometh, whether he like it well or ill, there he must dwell for evermore. He shall never after change his dwelling, though he feel it ever so evil. Heaven and hell are these two places, and in one of them, each man must dwell. In heaven is more joy than may be told with tongue, or thought with heart; and in hell is more pain than any man may suffer. With these two spurs awake thou thy horse, and send thy heart before, as a secret friend, to espy these dwelling places, what they are. In hell thou shalt find all that heart may hate, default of all good, plenty of all evil that may grieve any thing in body or in soul.—Hot fire burning, darkness, brimstone most offensive, foul storms and tempests, greedy devils, open mouthed as raging lions, hunger and thirst that never

* It has been already stated that Wickliff's views were not clear on this point. Dr. James has however shown that they widely differed from the opinions of the church of Rome.

shall be quenched—there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and thick darkness. Each hateth the other as the foul fiend, and ever curse the time that they wrought sin. Above all things they desire to die, and they are ever dying, and fully die they never shall, but ever dying live in pain and wo. They hated death while they lived here, but now they had rather have it than all the wide world. Souls that are there shall be dark and dim, offensive and loathsome to see. The bodies shall be heavy and charged with sin, so that they shall move neither body nor limb, but have all manner of wo that shall grieve them. They shall think upon no good, and have no knowledge but of their pains and sins that they have wrought. And of all these pains, and many more sorrows than we can tell, end shall never come.

When thou understandest that the deadly sin which man has wrought, and which is not amended with better forthinking* ere he go hence, shall be bought so dearly with that everlasting pain, that thou wouldest desire rather to let thy skin be torn from thy flesh, and thy body hewn to pieces, than that thou wouldest wilfully do a deadly sin—this spur of dread shall make our horse awake, and hold him in an even way, and speed him fast forward, and cause him ever to flee deadly sin, which is thus dearly bought, and maketh man to be thus bitterly pained for ever. When thy heart hath thoroughly sought all these fearful pains which the sinful shall suffer who will not leave their sins, then send him to purgatory, and look how they shall fare who shall there be cleansed.

[Wickliff then describes the sufferings of purgatory, and the pains there to be endured for the doing away such sins as are not deadly,† cautioning however thus,] Of such as

* Repentance.

† Dr. James gives the following account of Wickliff's views respecting purgatory. "It cannot be denied but that in some places of his works he speaketh of the dreadful pains of purgatory, and praying for the dead.—It seemeth that he was not fully grounded in this opinion whereat some of the grave doctors of the church have stumbled; or rather, that howsoever he had maintained it, upon better advice he changed his opinion, which I gather by two circumstances. First, he writes, (De veritate Scripturæ, p. 267.) that all the sayings of purgatory were spoken by way of commination, as it were so many pious lies to scare the people. Secondly, he divides the church into three parts, the highest are the angels of heaven, the second are 'the saints sleeping or resting in purgatory.' The third are folk that shall be saved, here fighting upon earth. Of these three, saith he, and of none other, is made holy church; and surely by this division popish purgatory is thrust clean out of doors. For there is

some call small sins, it is full needful to beware. For St. Augustine saith, that many venial sins draw a man to perdition as one deadly sin doth. Many drops of rain make a great flood, and water entering little and little by the ship's bottom, and not cast out, sinketh the ship at the last, as a great wave drowns it suddenly. And since God is displeased and dishonoured by each sin, each sin is full great, though some sin is called little sin in comparison of greater sin, as St. Anselm saith. Wickliff proceeds thus:—

Heretofore some that have defiled their souls with many deadly sins, and also with innumerable that are venial, oftimes for dread to offend God more, and to get forgiveness of all their sins, and to flee the pains of hell and purgatory, have forsaken all this world, and the company thereof, and have fled into desert places, to learn to love Jesus, and bewail their own sins, and other men's also. Some souls are cleansed here, and have their purgatory with fire of tribulation and persecution, meekly suffering for the truth of God, and have much trouble because they would live well. Some also are cleansed through the fire of God's love. For the love of man's soul might so fully be set on God, that God of his great grace would cleanse him in this world, so clean from each spot of sin, that after this life he should feel little or none.

And this is the right spur that should quicken thy horse to speed in his way; that thou learn to love Jesus Christ, in all thy living. And therefore send thou thy thought into that land of life, where no disease is, of no kind; neither age nor sickness, nor any other grievance. Courtesy and wisdom there must men learn, for there all villainy is shut out. And whoso goeth thither shall there find a gracious fellowship; the orders of angels, and of all holy saints, and the Lord above them, who gladdeneth them all. There is plenty of all good, and want of all things that may grieve. There are fairness and riches, honour and joy that each man may feel; love and wisdom that ever shall last. There is no disease that men suffer here; as hypocrisy or flattery, nor falsehood, envy, and ire. Thence are banished thieves and tyrants, cruel and greedy men that pillage the poor, proud men and boasters, covetous and beguilers, slothful and licentious, all such are banished out of that pure land.

little rest and less sleeping there, if we believe them that have (feigned to) come from thence, and have told us so. And by this reason, if the fire of purgatory be clean put out, the smoke of it, that is prayers for the dead, must needs in a very short time vanish away."

For there is nothing that men may fear, but liking and joy and mirth at will, melody and song of angels, bright and lasting bliss that never shall cease. Man's body there shall be brighter than the sun ever was to man's sight.—As the light of the sun suddenly flees out of the east into the west, so shall the blissful, without any travail, be where they like. And though they were sick and feeble while they lived here, they shall be so strong there, that nothing shall move against their will. They shall have such great freedom that nothing shall be contrary to their liking. The saved bodies shall never have sickness, nor anger nor grievance. Also they shall be filled with joy in all their senses; for as a vessel that is dipped in water or other liquor, is wet within and without, above and beneath, and also all about, and no more liquor can be within it, even so shall those that are saved, be full filled with all joy and bliss. Also they shall have endless life in the sight of the Holy Trinity, and this joy shall pass all other. They shall be in full security, that they never fail of that joy, nor be put out thereof. They shall also be filled with wisdom; for they shall know all that is, and was, and shall be. They shall have full knowledge of the Holy Trinity; the might of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, and the goodness of the Holy Ghost. For in the sight of the blessed face of God, they shall know all things that may be seen of any creature. For as Augustine saith, They shall see him, both God and man, and they shall see themselves in him also. All things that are now hid from man, he shall then see and know. They shall also have perfect love to each other, for every one shall accord with the other's will. And these joys and many more than any tongue of man can fully tell, shall those have that shall be saved, both in body and soul, after the day of doom.

This is the right spur, which should stir men joyfully to love Jesus Christ, and to hasten in the heavenly way. For so sweet is the bliss there, and so great withal, that whoso might taste a single drop thereof, should be so rapt in liking of God, and of heavenly joy, and he should have such a languishing to go thither, that all the joy of the world should seem pain to him. This love should move such a man to live more virtuously, and to flee sin, a hundred fold more than any dread of the pain of purgatory or of hell. For perfect love putteth out all dread, and cleanseth the soul from filth, and maketh it to see God, and to flee oft to heaven by desire, hoping to dwell there, world without end.

TO LOVE JESUS.

Whosoever thou art that arrayest thyself to love God, if thou wilt neither be deceived nor deceive, if thou wilt be saved and not fail, if thou wilt stand and not fall, study to have this name Jesus constantly in mind. If thou doest so the enemy shall fall, and thou shalt stand, the enemy shall be enfeebled, and thou shalt be strengthened—therefore seek this name, Jesus, hold it and forget it not. Nothing so quenches flames, restrains evil thoughts, cuts away venomous affections, or alienates from us vain occupations.

This name, Jesus, truly held in mind, rooteth up vices, planteth virtues, bringeth charity or love to men, getteth men savour of heavenly things, wasteth discord, informeth peace, giveth everlasting rest, or doeth away heaviness of fleshly desires. All earthly desires, all earthly things, it turneth into heaviness. It filleth those that it loveth with spiritual joy; so that worthily it may be said, All shall be glorified in thee, that love thy name, for thou shalt bless the righteous. The righteous deserveth to be blessed, for he hath truly loved this name, Jesus. He is called righteous, because he seeks earnestly to love Jesus. What can fail to him who unceasingly covets to love Jesus? He loveth and he desireth to love, for thus we know the love of God to stand; for the more we love, the more we covet to love.

It is said, They that eat me shall not hunger, and they that drink me, shall not thirst. Therefore the love of Jesus by itself is delectable and desirable. Therefore no joy shall fail those that covet earnestly to love him whom angels desire to behold. Angels see him always, and ever desire to see him; for they are so full filled that their filling doeth not away their desire, and they desire so that their desire doeth not away their fullness. This is full joy, this is glorious joy. Therefore all men shall be glorified that love thy name.—If they loved not, they should not be glorified, and those that love most, shall joy most. For of love proceedeth joy, therefore he that loveth not shall for ever be without joy.

Therefore many caitiffs* think to joy with Christ, but as they love not his name, Jesus, they shall sorrow without end, whatever they do. And if they give all things that they have to poor men, unless they love this name

* Wretched beings.

Jesus, they shall labour in vain. For only such shall be gladdened in Jesus who have loved him in this present life. Those that defoul him with vices and foul thoughts, and turn not again, there is no doubt but they are put out from the glory of God. Therefore he shall not see the glory of God, that hath not joyfully loved this name Jesus.

Be the wicked man done away that he see not the glory of God—righteous men seek glory and life, and they find it in Jesus whom they loved. I went about by coveting and riches, and I found not Jesus. I went about by the swallow of lusts, and I found not Jesus. I ran by wantonness of my flesh, and I found not Jesus. I sat in company of worldly mirth, but there I found him not. I sought him in highness of myself,* but there I found him not. In all these things I sought him, but I found him not. For he let me know by his grace that he is not found in the land of easy and soft living. Therefore I turned by another way and sought him by poverty; and I found Jesus—born into the world poor, laid in a craitch,† and wrapped in poor rags. I went by sharp sufferings, and I found Jesus weary in the way, tormented with hunger, and thirst, and cold; filled with slanders and reproofs. I sat by myself, fleeing the vanities of the world, and I found Jesus fasting in the desert, and praying by himself in the hill. I went about in penance and pain, and I found Jesus, bound fast, hand and foot, to a pillar of stone, and from the head to the feet all torn with scourges. I found Jesus hanging on the cross, fast nailed hand and foot, having gall given him to drink, and dying on the cross. Therefore Jesus is not found in riches, but in poverty; not in delicacies, but in penance; not in idle and wanton joying, but in bitter weeping and mourning; not among many, but in a lonely place; not in soft nourishing of body, but in pain of body.

In truth, an evil man findeth not Jesus; for he sees him not where he is. He enforces himself to seek Jesus in the joys of this world, where he shall never be found. O ye worldly and fleshly caitiffs,‡ ye are led away from the joy of God, and deceived with the devil's fraud, not abiding the blessed hope, nor desiring the coming of the glory of God. Worthily shall ye suffer everlasting death, for ye follow this life, which ye know shall not long be had here. Truly your eyes are blinded—the devil hath put them out;

* Pride, high thoughts. † Crib, or manger. ‡ Wretched creatures.

for that which ye see, ye believe not. When ye behold a man dying, and yet dread not death, ye are confused or ruined, for the Lord hath despised you; ye are accursed and made abominable. All holy angels and lovers of Jesus Christ shall be full filled with great joy, when your reprovable company shall all be damned to everlasting fire. Wo be to you rich men! Wo to you proud folk! Wo to you lechers! Wo be to all willing to do sin. For your hire shall be yielded to you—torment of hell, ready for you from the beginning of the world. I know that ye must go down thither, for from your wicked customs neither joy of heaven nor torment of hell can call you. Whereto therefore say ye idly, "We shall be saved in Jesus; while ye cease not to hate him, without whom ye cannot have health?* Who, not loving Jesus, hopeth to be saved—truly, lacking faith, he accuses himself as under condemnation. Verily he loveth health who unweariedly keepeth the name of Jesus in himself.

I wonder not that a man, being tempted, falleth, who hath not the name of Jesus lasting in his mind. Securely hath he chosen to be in oneliness† for God, when he especially chooses this name Jesus. Truly this name cleanses the conscience, makes the heart clear and clean, and drives away fear. It gets a man warmth of love, lifts up the mind to heavenly melody, and chases away the watchful fiends.

Oh thou good name! Oh thou sweet name! Oh glorious name! Oh healthful name! Oh name to be desired! Wicked spirits may not abide thee, when they behold Jesus, either in mind, or hear him named in mouth. I sought to love Jesus, and ever the more I grew perfect in his love, so much the sweeter his name savoured to me. Therefore blessed be the name of Jesus for ever and ever, and so be it. Amen.

OF THE LOVE OF JESUS.

Only Lord be tears to me as loves by day and by night. For unless a man be punished first by weepings and wailings, he may not come to the sweetness of God's love. O thou everlasting love, inflame my mind to love God, that it burn not but to his callings. O good Jesus! who shall give to me that I feel thee. Thou must now be felt and not seen. Enter into the inmost recesses of my soul; come

* Salvation. † Singleness of heart.

into mine heart and full fill it with thy most clear sweetness; make my mind to drink deeply of the fervent wine of thy sweet love, that I, forgetting all evils, and all vain visions, and scornful imaginations, thee only embracing, joying I rejoice in my Lord Jesus.

Thou most sweet Lord, from henceforward pass not from me, dwell with me in thy sweetness; for only thy presence is to me solace or comfort, and only thy absence leaves me sorrowful. O thou Holy Ghost, who inspirest where thou wilt, come into me, draw me to thee, that I despise and set at nought in my heart all things of this world. Inflame my heart with thy love which shall without end burn upon thine altar. Come, I beseech thee, thou sweet and true joy; come thou sweetness so to be desired; come thou my beloved, who art all my comfort. True love suffers not a loving soul to dwell in itself, but draws it forth to its beloved.

There are three degrees of Christ's love, in which those that are chosen to God's love go from one to another. The first is called insuperable; the second is inseparable; the third is called singular. Love is insuperable when it cannot be overcome with any other affection or love, no trial or temptation—when it gladly casts down all other hinderances, and all temptations, and quenches fleshly desires. When man suffers gladly and meekly all anguish for Christ, and is not overcome with any delight or flattering, so that whether thou art in ease or in anguish, in sickness or in health, that thou wouldest not, to have all the world, anger God at any time. And blessed is the soul that is in this state; every labour is light to him that loveth truly, neither can any man better overcome travail than by love.

Love is inseparable when man's mind is inflamed with great love, and cleaves to Christ by inseparable thought; not suffering Christ to be any moment out of his mind, but as though he were bound in the heart, him he thinketh upon, to him with great earnestness he draweth his spirit. Therefore, when the love of Christ so groweth in the heart of the lover of God, and the despiser of the world, so that it may not be overcome of any other affection or love, then it is said to be high. When man cleaveth to Christ undepartingly, thinking upon him, forgetting him for no other occasion, then man's love is said to be inseparable and everlasting. And what love can be more or greater than this?

The third degree of love is singular. If thou seekest or receivest any other comfort than of thy God, even though

thou lovest highly, then lovest not singularly. This degree is highest and most wonderful to attain; for it hath no peer. Singular love is, when all solace and comfort is closed out of the heart, but the love of Jesus alone. Other delight or other joy pleases not; for the sweetness of him is so comforting and lasting, his love is so burning and gladdening, that he who is in this degree may well feel the fire of love burning in his soul. That fire is so pleasant that no man can tell it but he that feeleth it, and not fully he. Then the soul is Jesus loving, on Jesus thinking, and Jesus desiring, only burning in coveting of him; singing in him, resting on him. Then the thought turns to song and melody. The soul that is in this degree may boldly say, I mourn for love! I languish to come to my loved Jesus. This degree of love cometh not of man's merit, but God giveth it freely, to whom he knoweth able thereto, and not without great grace coming before. Therefore, let no man presume farther of himself than God hath called him to. But he that most withdraws his love from the world, and from unreasonable lusts, shall be most able, and most speedily increase in these degrees of love. Those that have liking in any other things than in Jesus, and in the sweetness of his law, come not to this degree of love. In the first degree are some, in the second but few, in the third scarcely any. For the higher the living is, and the more it profits, the fewer lovers it hath; and the fewer followers.

The apostle Paul saith, Other is the light of the sun, other of the moon, and other of the stars. And so it is of the lovers of Jesus Christ. He that is in this degree of love, desireth to be unbound of the bond of flesh, and to be in full joy with Jesus, whom he loveth. Therefore such a one in his mourning for his long abiding, may sing this song to his loved Jesus, "When wilt thou come, my Beloved, to comfort me and bring me out of care, and give thyself to me, that I may see thee and dwell with thee for evermore? My Beloved, more than any other, when shall my heart break that I sorrow no more? Thy love hath wounded my heart, and I am desirous to depart, I stand still mourning for one lovely to love. His love draweth me. The bond of His love holdeth me away from vain places and play, till I may get him—the sight of my Beloved who never shall go away."

In wealth be our walkings, without noie* or night;
My love is in thee lasting, and longeth to thy sight.

* Hinderance.

Thus love moveth a soul in which it dwells, to sing of his Beloved, ever having the heart upward to the joys above. And this bringeth out love tears, languishing for joy. But this sentence savoureth not to a fleshly soul. Love is a burning desire to God, with a wonderful delight in soul. Love uniteth the lover and the beloved. Love is the desire of the heart, ever thinking on that which it loveth. Love is a stirring of the soul to love God for himself, and all other things for God. This love putteth out all other love that is against God's will. Love is a right will, turned from all earthly things, and joined to God without departing, accompanied with the fire of the Holy Ghost; far from defouling, far from corruption, to no vice bowing, high above all fleshly lusts, ever ready to the contemplation of God; the sun of all good affections, the health of good manners, and of the commandments of God, the death of sins, life of virtues, crown of overcomers, the arms of holy thoughts. Without love no man can please God, with it no man sinneth to death. True love clotheth the soul, and delivereth it from the pains of hell, and of foul service to sin, and from the fearful fellowship of devils. The child of the fiend it maketh the son of God, and partaker of the heritage of heaven. Therefore close thee in love as the iron closes in the redness of fire, as air doth in the sun, as the wool in the dye. The coal closes the iron so in the fire that it is all fire; the air so in the sun that it is all light; wool so takes the hue that it changes all to the colour.

In this manner shall a lover of Jesus Christ do. He shall so burn in love that he shall be wholly turned into the fire of love; he shall so shine in virtues that no part of him be dark in vices.

OF MEEKNESS.

To any degree of true love to Jesus, no soul can attain unless he is truly meek. For a proud soul seeks to have his own will, and so shall he never come to any degree of God's love. Ever the lower that a soul sitteth in the valley of meekness, so many the more streams of grace and love come thereto. And if the soul be high in the hills of pride, the wind of the fiend bloweth away all manner of goodness therefrom. Therefore as St. Augustine biddeth, Whoso will attain to the bliss that is in heaven above, let him set

the ground of his foundation here low in meekness. Nothing more overcometh the fiend than meekness, and therefore he hateth it so much. For he may fast, he may wake, and suffer more pain than any other creature, but meekness and love he may not have, neither any of his disciples.

By two things principally, may a man know whether he is meek. If his heart be not moved, though his own will be contraried and gainsaid—and when he is despised, falsely accused, and slandered; if his will stand unmoved to desiring of revenge, and his mouth be shut from unmeek answer. For whoso is entered verily into God's love, it grieves him not, whatsoever slander, shame, or reproof he suffereth for the love of his Lord; but he coveteth and is glad that he is worthy to suffer pain for Christ's love.

Thus Christ's disciples went joying from the council of the Jews, that they were worthy to suffer despites and wrongs for the name of Jesus. For the apostle saith, All that will live meekly, and please Jesus Christ, shall suffer persecutions, and by many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. For it is given to such, not only that they believe in Christ, but also that they suffer for him. Therefore the meek lover of Christ is to be as a dead body, which, whatsoever I do or say thereto, answereth not. The prophet of God affirms that he did thus, saying, Those that sought to do me evil spake vanities and thought guiles all day; but I as deaf heard not, and was as a dumb man not opening his mouth.

By seven tokens a man may suppose that he hath the love of Christ. The first is, when all coveting of earthly things, and fleshly lusts, is slacked in him. For where coveting is, there is not the love of Christ. Then if a man have not coveting it is a sign that he hath love. The second is, burning desire of heaven. For when he hath felt aught of that savour, the more he feeleth the more he coveteth, and he that hath felt nought, desireth nought. The third token is, if his tongue be changed. That which was wont to speak of earth now speaketh of heaven. The fourth is, exercise or practising what is for spiritual good. As when a man, leaving all other things, hath good will and devotion to prayer, and findeth sweetness therein. The fifth is, when things which are hard in themselves, through love seem light to be done. The sixth is, hardiness of soul to suffer all anguishes and troubles that befall. All the other tokens suffice not without this; for he that is righteous

hateth nothing but sin; he loveth God alone, and for God; he hath no joy but in God; he feareth not, but to offend God. And all his hope is to come to God. The seventh is, joyfulness of soul when he is in tribulation, and that he love God, and thank him in all diseases that he suffers. It is the greatest token that he hath the love of God, when no wo, tribulation, or persecution, can bring him down from this love. Many love God, as it seemeth to them, while they are in ease, but in adversity, or in sickness, they grudge against God; thinking that they do not deserve so to be punished for any trespass they have done. And oftimes some say that God doeth them wrong. All such are feigned lovers, and have not the true love of God. For the Holy Ghost saith, He that is a true friend loveth at all times.

Three principal goods come from meek suffering of sickness. It cleanseth the soul from sin before done; it keepeth from those into which it was likely to fall; it increaseth reward in bliss, and over gildeth the crown; and the longer it endureth the brighter waxeth the crown, and the soul cleaner. And in trust hereof St. Paul said that he would joy gladly in his sicknesses, that the virtue* of Christ dwell in him.

OF MAN'S WILL.

Every deed that is praisable or reprovable of man's will, hath praising or reproving. Truly in the will is the root and beginning of all deeds which are in our power. And if we must not do the thing that we would do, each man is denied of God his own proper will. Therefore behold ye not only what ye do, but as much what ye would do. Not more what are your works than what is your will. Through just will, man is called just; and through unjust will, man is said to be unrighteous. And therefore if ye will live well, keep well your will. If ye would know whether your will be rightful, that will for certain is rightful which is undersought† to the will of God. Whosoever liveth holily and rightfully, let him not despise the worst sinners. They being tempted fall, for they have not grace to withstand, although by their own malice they turn from good to evil. No man can work well, and love God, or be chaste, unless God give it to him. Therefore thou that art blown up with pride because thou hast not done evil, because thou hast

* Power. † Submitted.

withdrawn thyself from fleshly lusts, and hast sustained or suffered sharp penance, and therefore hast taken praising of man's mouth; have mind that unless the goodness of Christ had kept thee in, thou shouldest have fallen into as many evils, or worse, as others have done. Not of thyself hast thou power to gainstand, but of Him of whom the prophet saith, Lord, I shall love thee for thou art my strength, my ground, my refuge, him that undertaketh for me, and my helper. Therefore, if thou hast nothing but what thou hast received, why hast thou vain joy in thyself as though thou hadst not received it?

But nevertheless, let no man be favourable to sin; for God, by his prophet, crieth to good men, and the same cry to you, Go ye away, and go ye out from thieves, and touch not unclean things. What is it to touch unclean things? It is, to consent to sins. What is it to go out thence? To do that which pertaineth to amendment of evil men. Act with meekness and peace as much as may be; as St. Augustine saith, This is to touch not the unclean thing, not to consent thereto in will. Ever be ye separated in heart from evil men. This is to commune not, to consent not; for we commune with an evil man when the fellowship of the will, or of approving, is joined to deeds.

Therefore consent ye not to evil men, that ye approve them; neither be ye negligent, that ye reprove them not; neither be ye proud, that ye reprove them not proudly. Therefore, my brethren, as many as ever ye have among you, that are yet grieved with the love of this world, avaricious men, forswearers, adulterers, beholders of jests, others that take counsel of false tellers of futurity, men given to drink and lechery, and whatever evil men ye know amongst you, reprove ye as much as ye are able, by meekness, that ye may go away unhurt; and that ye consent not to the touching unclean things. Beseech ye, and pray to God, that all such be amended and again called from their evils.

OF ACTIVE LIFE AND CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE.

Christ loved much Mary, and Martha her sister, as the gospel telleth. By Martha, who was busy to feed Christ, is understood active life; and by Mary who sat by meekness at Christ's feet, to hear his word, is understood contemplative life. Christ said not that Martha did evil in ministering,

but he blamed her that she would have drawn her sister from the more perfect life. For it is perilous for them that savour not the more perfect life, to withdraw others away, whom God calleth thereto. Christ said that Mary had chosen the better part, which should not be taken from her. For active life shall be taken away with death of body, but perfect contemplation never; for it is begun here, and it endureth more perfectly after this life.

St. Bede saith that active life is a studious servant of Christ, to be busy in just travails, and to keep the commandments of God and himself undefouled from the world, and to hold soul, hand, tongue, and all members of the body, from all filth of sin tempting them. Afterwards to help the need of neighbours, as much as he may, to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, to visit the sick, and such other, and to show the way of truth to him that erreth; to call again the proud neighbour to the way of meekness, and tell those who are with us how they must stand. And let no man enforce to pass into contemplative life, unless he have long time practised this life, for if he presume foolishly it speedeth not.

Contemplative life hath two parts, the lower consists in meditation, or thinking of holy scripture, and in other sweet thoughts of Jesus, and in sweetness of prayers. The higher part is in beholding of heavenly things, having the eye of the heart among the heavenly citizens, thinking on God, the beauty of angels, and holy souls. Contemplation is a wonderful joy in God's love, which joy is a loving of God that cannot be told. And that wonderful love is in the soul, and for abundance of joy and sweetness it ascends into the mouth; so that heart, tongue, body, and soul, joy together in God.

This gladness God sendeth into the soul that he chooseth to this life. When a man hath long practised good doing, and sweetness of prayer, and is wont to feel compunction, and to be free from occupations of this world, and hath learned to occupy the eye of the soul alone in the love of God, and hath begun in desiring earnestly a foretaste, yea, in this life the joy of everlasting bliss which he shall take in the life to come. Truly that soul which is called and chosen of God to this life, God first inspireth to forsake the world in will, and all the vanity and coveting and lusts thereof. After that, He leadeth him alone, all troubles and worldly company being forsaken, and speaketh to his heart; and as

the prophet saith, He giveth him to taste the sweetness of beginning of love, and turneth his will to holy prayers, and sweet meditations; putting out of the heart idle thoughts and all vanities, setting it to think on him and heavenly things. Then He openeth to the eye of such a soul the gate of heaven, so that the same eye looketh into heaven, and then the fire of love enlighteneth his heart, and burning therein maketh it clean of all earthly filth; and so, thenceforward, he is contemplative, and filled with love of a sight which he saw in heaven with the spiritual eye of his soul. But no man hath perfect sight of heaven while he liveth here, in the body; but he that endeth in this love, as soon as he dieth, is brought before God with companies of angels, and seeth him face to face, and dwelleth with him without end.

All these sentences (opinions) foregoing, I have gathered of holy writ, and of divers saints, and doctors, and nothing of mine own head; to show to my poor brethren and sisters what grace and love our Lord Jesus hath showed to souls in this life. For each man should ascend from one to another, as he is called of God, some in higher, some in lower, as he is enabled of God thereto. But for that, I, myself, caitiff and wretch, unworthy through divers sins before done, being beneath all these perfect points, which seem to me as far distant as from hence to heaven. Therefore I beseech all that read or hear this treatise, to pray for me to God, that he forgive my sins, and quicken my soul with grace of his heavenly treasure of love. And let us all, together, give thanks to the Holy Trinity, who thus graciously lightenneth the souls of mortal men with the beams of his heavenly grace. Blessed be the name of our Lord, into worlds of worlds. Amen.

Here endeth the book called the Poor Caitiff.

At the end of one of the manuscripts of the Poor Caitiff, in the British Museum, MS. Harl. 2335, is the following note, which proves the value placed upon its contents in the days of darkness preceding the reformation, and shows one method of circulating the truth then adopted.

"This book was made of the goods of John Gamalin, for a common profit, that the person that has this book committed to him of the person that hath power to commit it, have the use thereof for the time of his life, praying for the soul of the same John. And that he that hath this aforesaid use of commission, when he occupieth it not, leave he it for a time to some other person. Also that the person to whom it was committed for the term of life, under the foresaid conditions, deliver it to another the term of his life. And so be it delivered and committed from person to person, man or woman, as long as the book endureth."

HOW THE OFFICE OF CURATES* IS ORDAINED OF GOD.

(From the MS. in the Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge.)

THE office of curates is ordained of God; few do it well and many full evil, therefore test we their defaults, with God's help.†

I. They are more busy about worldly goods than virtues and good keeping of men's souls. For he that can best get riches of this world together, and have a great household, and worldly array, is held to be a worthy man of holy church, though he know not the best point of the gospel. Such a one is praised and borne up by the bishops and their officers. But the curate that gives himself to study holy writ and teach his parishioners to save their souls, and live in meekness, penance, and busy labour about spiritual things, and cares not about worldly respect and riches, is held to be a fool and destroyer of holy church. He is despised and persecuted by high priests and prelates and their officers, and is hated by other curates. This makes many to be negligent in their spiritual cures, and to give themselves to occupations and business about worldly goods. These negligent curates think but little, how dearly Christ bought man's soul with his precious blood and death, and how hard a reckoning he shall make at doomsday for those souls. They would seem to be out of christian faith—for they make not themselves ready to come thither, and to answer how they came into their benefices, and how they

* By curate was meant any minister that has the care of souls.

† Wickliff composed three pieces, entitled, Of Prelates, For the order of Priesthood, and How the office of Curates is ordained of God. His design was to show from the authority of scripture the duties of the clergy, to expose the errors and wicked practices then so general, and to point out the evil consequences both to the people and themselves. His language in these pieces is bold and uncompromising, and exhibits a painful picture of the state of the romish priesthood at that day. The latter tract appears the most suitable for the present collection, but in copying it for the press it was not thought desirable to transcribe the whole. What is here given will be a sufficient testimony respecting many evils prevalent in the days of Wickliff, to which a large portion of his writings refer.

lived and taught, and spent poor men's goods. For if they had such a faith in their minds, they would begin a better life, and continue therein.

II. The second default is, that they run fast, by land and by water, in great peril of body and soul, to get rich benefices; but they will not knowingly go a mile to preach the gospel, though christened men are running to hell for want of knowing and keeping of God's law; and certainly here they show, indeed, that they are foully blind with covetousness, and worship false gods, as St. Paul saith.

Since they so much love worldly riches, and labour for them night and day, in thought and deed, and labour so little for God's worship and the saving of christian souls, who can excuse these covetous clerks from simony and heresy? Neither God's law, nor man's law, nor reason, nor good conscience. And let the king and his council inquire how much gold goes out of our land, for purchase of benefices, into alien's hands, and how much is given privately to men in the land. They shall find many thousand pounds.*

III. The third default of evil curates is, that they are angels of Satan to lead men to hell; for, instead of truly teaching Christ's gospel, they are dumb, or else tell men's traditions. Instead of example of good life, they hurt their parishioners many ways—by example of pride, envy, covetousness, and unreasonable vengeance—cruelly cursing for tithes, and evil customs. And for example of holy devotion, devout prayer, and works of mercy, they teach idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, and lechery, and maintaining of these sins, and many more. For since priests are called angels† in holy writ, and these curates bring not the message of God, but of the fiend, as their wicked life showeth, they are not angels of God, but of the fiend, as the true clerk Robert Grosthead‡ wrote to the pope. St. Peter was called Satan by Christ, as the gospel telleth, because he was contrary to God's will, and savoured not of heavenly things; well then are these evil curates so called, since they are

* At that time the pope and the court of Rome exercised the chief ecclesiastical patronage in England. A large portion of the benefices were held by foreigners. In the reign of Henry III. the sums thus received by Italians were more than three times the amount of the king's revenues.

† Messengers.

‡ Grosthead, or Grosseteste, was Bishop of Lincoln in the preceding century. He strenuously opposed the corruptions of the papacy. See Hist. of the Church of Christ, cent. xiii.

more contrary to God's will, and savour less of spiritual things, and the saving of christian souls.

IV. The fourth error is, that they think more of statutes of sinful men than the most reasonable law of almighty God. For they dread the pope's law, and statutes made by bishops, and other officers, more than the noble law of the gospel. Therefore they have many great and costly books of man's law, and study them much, but few curates have the bible and expositions of the gospel, they study them but little and do them less. But would to God that every parish church in this land had a good bible and good expositions on the gospel, and that the priests studied them well, and taught truly the gospel and God's commands to the people. Then should good life prevail, and rest, and peace, and charity; sin and falseness should be put back—God bring this end to his people.

V. The fifth default is, that they practise strife and plea,* and gather envy and hate from laymen for tythes.† They leave preaching of the gospel, and cry fast after tythes, and summon men to account, and by force take their goods, or else curse them seven foot above the earth, and seven foot under the earth, and seven foot on each side, and afterwards draw men to prison as though they were kings and emperors of men's bodies and goods; forgetting wholly the meekness and patience of Christ and his apostles, how they cursed not when men would neither give them meat, nor drink, nor harbour; but Christ blamed his apostles when they would have asked such vengeance, as the gospel of St. Luke teaches. And St. Peter biddeth to bless other men, even enemies, and not to have will to curse. Paul also teacheth that we should not do evil for evil, but overcome an evil deed by good doing.

VI. The sixth default is, that they teach their parishioners, by their deeds and life, which are as a book to them, to love and seek worldly glory, and to be careless of heavenly things. For they make themselves busy, night and

* Law.

† Wickliff's views respecting tythes have already been noticed in his life, see p. 41.

William Russel, a Lollard, thus stated his opinions upon the subject of dymes or tythes. "Personal dymes fall not under the precepts of God's law, wherefore if custom were not to the contrary, it is lawful for Christ's people to dispose them to piteous use of poor men." Wilkins, iii. 438. See Fox's Acts and Monuments for the discussions on this subject among the Bohemian reformers.

day, to get worldly advancement, and their own worship and dignity in this world, by pleading and striving therefore. Considering it great righteousness to hold forth and maintain points of worldly privilege, and dignity; but about spiritual dignity, and high degree of heavenly bliss, they will not strive against spiritual enemies; for they strive not who shall be most meek and willingly poor, and most busy in open preaching and private counselling how men shall obtain heaven, as Christ and his apostles did. But they, like moles, remain rooting after worldly worship, and earthly goods, as though there were no life but only in this wretched world.

VII. The seventh error is, that they teach sinful men to buy hell full dear, and not to come to heaven which is proffered them for little cost. For they teach christian men to suffer much cold, hunger, and thirst, and much waking, and despising, to get worldly honour; and a little dirt by false warring, out of charity; if they bring them much gold they absolve them lightly and to think themselves secure by their prayers, and grant them a blessing.* But they teach not how their parishioners should dispose themselves to receive gifts of the Holy Ghost, and keep conditions of charity, doing truth and good conscience to each man, both poor and rich. And if they are poor by the chances of the world, or willingly, by dread of sin, they set them at nought, and say they are cursed, because they have not much muck; and if they have much worldly goods, got with false oaths, false weights, and other deceits, they praise them, and bless them, and say that God is with them and blesseth them.

VIII. The eighth default. They shut the kingdom of heaven before men, and neither go in themselves, nor suffer other men to enter, for they shut up holy writ—as the gospel, and commandments, and conditions of charity, which are called the kingdom of heaven, by false new laws, and evil glossing, and evil teaching. For they will neither learn themselves, nor teach holy writ, nor suffer other men to do it, lest their own sin and hypocrisy be known, and their pleasurable life withdrawn. Thus they close Christ's life and his apostles' from the common people, by the keys of antichrist's judgment and censures; and they make them not so hardy as to say a truth of holy writ against their accursed

* The great wealth acquired by some in the wars which then prevailed has been noticed in the life of Wickliff. The sufferings of the people at large, as may be supposed, were in proportion.

life, for that shall be held to be detraction and envy, and against charity! Therefore they make the people follow their teaching, their statutes, and their customs, and to leave God's teaching; and thereby lead them blindly to hell, and thus close the kingdom of heaven from them.

IX. The ninth error is, that they waste poor men's goods on rich furs and costly clothes, and worldly array, feasts of rich men, and in gluttony, drunkenness, and lechery. For they sometimes pass great men in their gay furs and precious clothes—they have fat horses with gay saddles and bridles. St. Bernard crieth, Whatever curates hold of the altar more than a simple livelihood and clothing, is not theirs, but other men's.*

X. The tenth default is, that they haunt lords' courts, and are occupied in worldly offices, and do not take care of their parishes, although they take more worldly goods for them, than Christ and his apostles. Certainly it is great treachery; for what man durst undertake to keep men who are besieged in a feeble castle by many strong enemies, and then flee into a swineherd's office, and let enemies take the castle and destroy it? Were not this open treason? and would not this keeper be guilty of the loss of the castle, and all men therein? So it is of the curates and christian souls of which they take care, who are besieged by fiends, when they leave them unkept, and busy themselves in worldly offices and lords' courts. Are not these lords, who thus hold curates in their courts and worldly offices, traitors to God Almighty, since they draw away his chief knights from their spiritual battle, when and where they were most needful for this service.†

* Chaucer, in his Plowman's tale, describes priests, as,

That high on horse willeth ride,
In glitter and gold of great array,
Y painted and portred‡ all in pride, (‡ *Set out.*)
No common knight may go so gay,
Change of clothing every day,
With golden girdles great and small.

† Chaucer thus describes the secular canons of that day:

They are curates of many towns,
On earth they have great power,—
And yet they serve the king also.—
Some their churches never see,
Nor ever a penny thither send,—
Though that the poor for hunger die,
A penny on them they will not spend,
Have they receiving of the rent,
They care not for the remanent.

XI. The eleventh error is, that they attend more to wrongful commandments of sinful men, than to the most rightful commandments of God. For if the pope or bishop send a letter to receive a pardoner to deceive the people, by grants of many thousand years of pardon, he shall be despatched ;* although if there come a true man, to preach the gospel freely and truly, he shall be hindered for wrongful command of a sinful man. And thus they put God's commandment and his rightful will behind, and put sinful man's will and wrong commandments before ; and thus for their own worldly profit and bodily ease they stop their parishioners from hearing of God's law, which is food for the soul, and lead them blindly to hell. These are evil fathers who thus cruelly starve their subjects' souls, and drive them to damnation, for love of worldly muck, or bodily ease, or for dread of wretched antichrists, who are traitors to God and his people.

XII. The twelfth error is, that they despise the principal duty, which is commanded of God to curates, and busy themselves about novelties made by sinful men. For they know not to preach the gospel wisely, and they busily learn men's traditions for worldly gain, but not the gospel which Christ, God and man, taught and commanded curates to teach, as to life and death.

XIII. The thirteenth error is, that they curse their spiritual children more for the love of worldly good than for breaking God's commands. For though a man openly break God's commands, living in pride, in false ways, and in open breaking of the holy day, he shall not be summoned, nor punished, nor cursed by them ; but if a man be behind of tythes and other offerings and customs made of sinful men, he shall be summoned, punished, and cursed, though he cannot live out of other men's debts, and find his wife and his children by God's commandments.

XIV. They take their worldly mirth, hawking, hunting,† and doing other vanities, and suffer wolves of hell to strangle men's souls by many cursed sins. They should

* See § xix.

† Chaucer describes his monk,

> He gave not of that text a pulled hen,
> That saith that hunters be not holy men.
> * * * * * * * *
> Greyhounds he had as swift as fowl of flight,
> Of riding, and of hunting of the hare,
> Was all his lust, for no cost would he spare.

draw men from worldly vanities, and teach them the perils of this life, and to think upon their death day, and be a mirror to them to mourn for their sins, and other men's, and for the long tarrying of heavenly bliss, and to continue in holy prayers, and true teaching of the gospel, and espying the fiend's deceits to warn christian men of them; but now the more a curate hath, the more he wasteth in costly feeding of hounds and hawks, suffering poor men to have great default of meat, and drink, and clothes.

XV. The fifteenth is, that they haunt taverns out of measure, and stir up laymen to drunkenness, idleness, and cursed swearing, chiding, and fighting. For they will not follow earnestly in their spiritual office, after Christ and his apostles, therefore they resort to plays at tables, chess, and hazard, and roar in the streets, and sit at the tavern till they have lost their wits, and then chide, and strive, and fight sometimes. And sometimes they have neither eye, nor tongue, nor hand, nor foot, to help themselves, for drunkenness. By this example the ignorant people suppose that drunkenness is no sin; but he that wasteth most of poor men's goods at taverns, making himself and other men drunken, is most praised, for nobleness, courtesy, goodness, freeness, and worthiness.

XVI. The sixteenth is, They will not give the sacraments of the altar, that is, Christ's body, to their parishioners, unless they pay tithes and offerings, and unless they have paid money to a worldly priest, to slay christian men. If men doubt of this, let them inquire the truth, how it was when the bishop of Norwich went into Flanders and killed them by many thousands, and made them our enemies.* Little reckon the curates in what devotion and charity their parishioners receive Christ's body, when they openly take them up from God's board, and stir them to impatience, envy, and hate, for a little muck which they claim to themselves.

XVII. The seventeenth is, they are blind leaders, leading the people to sin, by their evil example and false deceit in teaching. For though they know not one point of the gospel, nor what they read, they will take a benefice, with

* Wickliff here alludes to the crusade of the bishop of Norwich in behalf of pope Urban. See life, p. 33.

cure of men's souls, and neither know how to rule their own soul, nor other men's, nor will learn, nor suffer other men to teach their parishioners the gospel and God's commands truly and freely.

XVIII. The eighteenth is, They are false prophets, teaching false chronicles and fables to colour their worldly life thereby; and leave the true gospel of Jesus Christ. For they love well to tell how this or that saint lived in gay and costly clothes, and worldly array, although it is a great sin. But they leave to teach the great penance and sorrow which they did afterwards, which pleased God, and not their worldly life. And then they make the people think that worldly life of priests, and their vain costliness pleases God. And they make the people believe that a good christian man, keeping well God's law, shall be damned for a wrongful curse of a worldly priest, who is in a fiend's case. Thus they bring the people out of christian faith by their false chronicles and fables, for Christ saith, that men shall be blessed of God, when men shall curse them, and pursue them, and say all evil against them falsely for the love of Christ and his truth; and the people believe the contrary of this teaching of Christ, by the fables and saints' deeds, or lyings about saints.

XIX. The nineteenth. They assent to pardoners deceiving the people in faith, and charity, and of worldly goods, for to have part of their gathering, and they, hindering priests from preaching the gospel, for dread lest their sins and hypocrisy be known and stopped. For when there cometh a pardoner to rich places with stolen bulls, and false relics, granting more years of pardon than come before doomsday, for gaining worldly wealth, he shall be received of curates to have a part of that which he getteth. But a priest who will tell the truth to all men, without glosing, and freely, without begging of the poor people, shall be hindered by subtle cavils of man's law, for dread lest he touch the sore of their conscience and accursed life. This pardoner shall tell of more power than Christ ever granted to Peter or Paul, or any apostle, to draw the alms from poor bedridden neighbours, who are known to be feeble and poor, to get it himself, and waste it in idleness, gluttony, and lechery, and to send gold out of our land to rich lords of houses where there is no need, and make our land poor by many ways; hereby the people are more bold to live

in sin, and know not they have as much thank and reward of Christ if they do alms to poor feeble men, as he biddeth.*

XX. The twentieth is, that a priest of good life and devout and true preaching of God's law, is despised, hated, and pursued by worldly curates; and a false priest, of worldly life and array, who suffers men to rot in their accursed sins, is loved, praised, and cherished among them; for they say that such a good priest is a hypocrite, and slandereth men of holy church, and hindereth men from doing their devotion to holy church.

XXI. The one and twentieth. They hide and maintain their sins and other men's by the protection and help of lords, that their sovereigns may not correct them, nor compel them to residence. For when there is a vicious curate, he will have letters of kings and lords to dwell in their courts, in worldly offices, and be absent from his cure, that his sovereign dare not correct him. Thus lords are made shields of sin, for a little money, or worldly service of wicked curates.

XXII. The two and twentieth is, that many of them, under colour of learning the gospel, learn statutes made by sinful men and worldly priests. When they have great benefices, peradventure by simony, and cannot teach their

* Chaucer well describes such a pardoner:

His wallet before him on his lap,
Brimful of pardons come from Rome all hot:—
In his mail he had a pillowbeer,
Which, as he said, was our lady's veil;
He said he had a gobbet of the sail
That St. Peter had, when that he went
Upon the sea, till Jesu Christ him hent.† *(† Caught.)*
He had a cross of latten full of stones,
And in a glass he had pigs' bones.
But with these relics, when he found
A poor parson dwelling in upland,
Upon a day he got him more money,
Than that parson got in months tway,
And thus, with feigned flattering and japes,‡ *(‡ Tricks.)*
He made the parson and people his apes.
But truly to tell at the last,
He was in church a noble ecclesiast.
Well could he read a lesson or a story
But always best he sung an offertory,
Full well he wist when that song was sung
He must preach, and well afile his tongue,
To win silver, as he well could,
Therefore he sung so merrily and loud.

The privilege of selling pardons in a district or country was usually granted to some monastic body, or for raising some ecclesiastical structure, or not unfrequently it was given to some relation or favourite of the pope; and the persons receiving these grants, disposed of them to travelling agents who retailed the pardons among the people.

subjects to save their souls, and dare not hold their lemans at home for the clamour of men, they go to the schools and fare well of meat, and drink, and rest, and study with cups and strumpets. Where good priests labour to learn God's law, they go, after a manner, to civil or canon law, but do little good thereat.

XXIII. The three and twentieth. The wisest among them mispend their skill and understanding in maintaining of sins; as pride, and covetousness of clerks, and oppressing their poor parishioners by wrong customs, for dread of plea* and censure, and maintaining false causes and consistories, for gold; and take pensions of licentious men and women to help them to bathe in their sin as swine in the mire. Thereby, he that can crack a little latin, repeat stories of heathen men's law, and worldly priests' law, and can help to annoy a poor man by contrivances and their chapters, is held to be a noble clerk, and ready and wise, though he know not well how to read a verse in his psalter, nor understand a common authority of holy writ.† Such men despise God's law as though it were no law, and commend their own law and themselves, more than holy writ and Christ and his apostles. This maketh sin and falseness reign, and faith, truth, and charity are defouled and quenched.

XXIV. The four and twentieth is, that they put the holy law of God under the feet of antichrist and his clerks, and the truth of the gospel is condemned for error and ignorance by worldly clerks, who presume by their pride to be doomsmen of subtle and high mysteries, proving articles of holy writ, and blindly condemn truths of Christ's gospel, for they are against their worldly life and fleshly lusts, and condemn for heretics true men who teach holy writ, truly and freely, against their sins.

XXV. The five and twentieth error is, they choose laws made of sinful men, and worldly and covetous priests, to rule the people by them, as most needful and best laws; and forsake the most perfect law of the gospel and epistles, of Christ and his apostles, as not perfect, nor full enough, nor true. For now heathen men's laws and worldly clerks' statutes are read in universities, and curates learn them

* Law proceedings.

† Nicholas de Clemangis speaks of many clergy of that day, as unable to read. He says, "What signifies it to speak of letters and learning, when we see almost all priests without any knowledge, either of things or words, nay scarce able to read even by spelling."

fast with great desire, study, and cost, but the law of God is little studied or cared about; and less kept and taught. And in this antichrist's clerks say that Christ gave not a sufficient law, or the best, for the ruling of his people, and that worldly clerks and antichrist are truer, and in more charity than Jesus Christ, since their laws are better and more needful for christian men, than the laws which Christ made! But all christian men should cry out upon this blasphemous heresy, and fully take the gospel to be their rule, and not set by these new laws but as they are expressly grounded in holy writ, or good reason, true conscience, and charity. For, as St. Paul teaches, Whoever teaches other laws is accursed of God, yea, though he were an angel of heaven.

XXVI. The six and twentieth. They magnify themselves above Christ, God and man; for they command their subjects that they judge not clerks, nor their open works, nor their teaching, but do according to their teaching, be it true or false. But our Lord Jesus Christ commanded his enemies to judge of him a rightful doom. Also he bade his enemies to believe his works though they would not believe him, and bade men not believe him if he did not the works of his Father. Also Christ bade his enemies bear witness of evil, if he had spoken evil.

XXVII. The seven and twentieth. They are antichrists, hindering christian men from knowing their belief of holy writ; for they cry openly that secular men should not intermeddle with the gospel to read it in modern tongue, but listen to their spiritual father's preaching, and do after him in all things. But this is expressly against God's teaching. For God commandeth generally, to each layman, that he have God's commands before him, and teach them to his children. And the wise man biddeth every christian man, that all his telling be in the precepts of God Almighty, and that he have his commandments ever in mind. And St. Peter biddeth christians to be ready to give reason of their faith, and to teach each man that asketh it. And God commandeth his priests to preach the gospel to each man; and the wisdom is, that all men should know it, and rule their lives thereafter. Why should worldly priests forbid secular men to speak of the gospel and God's commands? since God giveth them naturally great understanding and great desire to know God, and to love him. For the more goodness they know of God, the more they shall

love God, while worldly priests, for their own ignorance, sloth, idleness, and pride, stop christian men from knowing God, and shut up from him the gifts that God giveth him. None, from the making of the world heard higher craft of antichrist to destroy christian man's belief and charity, than is this blasphemous heresy that laymen should not intermeddle with the gospel.

XXVIII. The eight and twentieth. They deceive men in doing of penance. For they do not tell the truth how they needs must forsake all falseness or craft in oaths, and all sin, to their knowledge and power. And not wittingly or willingly to do against God's commands, either for lucre, dread, or bodily death ; else it is not real contrition, and God will not absolve them for any confession of mouth, or absolution of priests, bulls of pardons, or letters of fraternities,* or masses, or prayers of any intercessor in earth or in heaven. They speak much of tythes and offerings in their confession ; but little of restitution, and doing of alms to poor men, but of mass-pence and church gains ; and thereby the people are brought out of belief, trusting that their sin is foregone for their priests' absolution, though they do not true penance as God himself teacheth. And hereby they magnify their own absolution more than God's forgiveness, for true contrition. When God himself declares that in the hour a sinner hath sorrow for his sin he shall be safe, they would make this word false, saying that he shall not be safe, be he ever so contrite, without absolution money is paid to them.

XXIX. The nine and twentieth. They rob christian people of the goods of fortune, the goods of nature, and the goods of grace,† by feigned censures of their own laws. For they curse so despitefully if men pay not money at their liking, which they claim by sinful men's laws, new customs,

* It was common for wealthy persons to pay considerable sums to some monastic order that they might be admitted into the fraternity, believing that they should thereby obtain salvation. Margaret, countess of Richmond, was admitted to the fraternity of five religious houses, namely, Westminster, Croyland, Durham, Wimbourn, and the Charterhouse at London. Chaucer's Jack Upland asks the friars, Why be ye so hardy to grant by letters of fraternity to men and women, that they shall have part and merit of all your good deeds, and ye know not whether God be satisfied with your deeds for your sins ? Also ye know not whether that man or woman be in a state to be saved or damned, then shall he have no merit in heaven for his own deeds, nor for any other man's.

† They deprive christian people of their property, natural abilities, and the gifts of grace.

and devotions, and not by God's law, that no man dare gainsay them in their wrong doing for fear of their curse, imprisonment, and loss of patience and charity.* And hereby they make christian men to hold forth their wrong customs, and man's law, and not to know God's law, and the right way to heaven. Certainly, it were less cruelty to keep men from bodily meat and drink, and make them to die bodily, than to keep them from hearing the gospel and God's commands, which are life to the soul. What accursed antichrists are these worldly prelates and curates, who curse men for preaching and hearing of holy scriptures!

XXX. The thirtieth. They take not dymes† and offerings by form of the old testament, and apportion their income to all priests and ministers needful in the church. Nor according to the form of the gospel, do they take a simple livelihood, given by free devotion of the people, without constraint or curses, as Christ and his apostles did. But by the new law of sinful men, a priest claims to himself all the tythes of a great country, by worldly law, and new censures. And he neither liveth as a good priest, nor teacheth as a curate, nor giveth the residue to poor men as a good christian man; but he wasteth it in pomp and gluttony and other sins, and hindereth true priests from doing the office enjoined to them by God Almighty. Surely it seemeth that these are not priests after God's law, but after the ordinances of sinful men, to be masters of God, and lords of christian people, since they never hold the law of God. And as to dymes taking, they take them by violence, and strong curses against men's good will, and make the people out of patience and charity by their pleading, and do not well their spiritual office.

XXXI. The one and thirtieth. That like serpents they serve busily to lords in secular offices for naught; but in the end poison their lords by the venom of simony, which is worse than any bodily poison. And when they have a benefice with cure of souls, they still dwell in worldly offices of lords, and spend poor men's livelihood in riot and gluttony,

* Chaucer's plowman says,

Christ's people they proudly curse,
With broad book, and braying bell.
To put pennies in their purse,
They will sell both heaven and hell—
If thou the truth of them will tell,
In great cursing shalt thou fall.

† Tythes.

and suffer christian men to perish in body and soul, for want of teaching and works of mercy.

XXXII. The two and thirtieth. They make lords and commons, by blind devotion and hypocrisy, to maintain worldly clerks, in pride, covetousness, and idleness, and false teaching of antichrist's errors; under colour of freedom, and worshipping of holy church and God's laws. For they care much that lords and commons shall maintain God's servants in (what they say is) his service, and the laws and liberties of holy church; and make new service pleasing to worldly men's ears, and new laws and customs for their own gain, and pride, and leave the holy law which God made for priests. Thus when lords and commons think they maintain God's priests and his law, they maintain antichrist's priests by their laws and wrong customs, and pride and other sins, instead of meekness and other virtues, and to the magnifying of men's laws and the despising of God's laws.

XXXIII. The three and thirtieth. They teach christian men to blaspheme God, and boldly to war against him. For they teach christian men to maintain men's laws and ordinances, as better and more needful than the holy law of Christ and his ordinances. And they declare that if christian men maintain the multitude of worldly clerks in their new laws, and customs, and liberties, they shall have God's blessing and prosperity, peace, and rest, by so many devout priests, secular and religious, praying, reading, and singing, night and day. And if they will bring priests out of this glorious life and new song, by meekness and spiritual poverty, with busy travail in learning and preaching of the gospel, as Christ and his apostles did, they shall be cursed, and have war and mischief, both in this world and the other. This makes the blind people to war against God and his ordinances, and to pursue his teachers as heretics.

Ye curates, see these heresies and blasphemies, and many more, which follow from your wicked life and wayward teachings. Forsake them for dread of hell, and turn to good life and true teaching of the gospel and ordinances of God, as Christ and his apostles did, for reward of heavenly bliss. And in confessions, and in other speeches, reprove more the breaking of God's commands, than the breaking of commands of new pilgrimages and offerings; and teach christian men to turn such vows already made, into better alms, as Christ teaches in the gospel.

O almighty God, bring curates into holy life, and true teaching after Christ and his apostles. Amen.

There were however clergy, even in that day, more faithful to the duties of their office, than those of whom Wickliff speaks in the preceding tract. Such a one is beautifully described by Chaucer. Some writers have supposed that he had Wickliff in his mind when delineating this minister of Christ.

A good man there was of religion,
He was a poor parson of a town,
But rich he was of holy thought and work,
He was a learned man, also a clerk,
That Christ's gospel truly would preach,
His parishioners devoutly would he teach.
Benign he was, and wondrous diligent,
And in adversity full patient,
And such a one he was proved oft sithes,
Full loth were he to curse for his tithes,
But rather would he give, out of doubt,
Unto his poor parishioners all about,
Both of his offering and his substance,
He could in little have a suffisance.
Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,
But he ne'er left, neither for rain nor thunder,
In sickness, nor in mischief, for to visit
The furthest in his parish, great or light,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff.
This noble example to his sheep he gave,
That first he wrought, and afterward taught
Out of the gospel he the words caught.
And this figure he added thereunto,
That if gold rust, what shall iron do?
For if a priest be foul, on whom we trust,
No wonder 'tis that a layman should rust.
And shame it is, if a priest take keep,
To see a foul shepherd, and a clean sheep.
Well ought a priest, example for to give
By his cleanness, how his sheep should live.
He set not his benefice to hire,
Nor left his sheep encumbered in the mire,
And ran to London, to St. Paul's,
To seek himself a chantry for souls.*

* Thus Langland, in Piers Plowman's vision, describes a priest.

——— Plained he to the bishop,
That his parishes were poor, since the pestilence time;
To have a licence, and leave at London to dwell,
To sing there for simony, for silver is sweet.

Nor with a brotherhood to be withold,
But dwelt at home, and kept well his fold,
So that the wolf made them not miscarry;
He was a shepherd, and not a mercenary.
And though he holy were and virtuous,
He was not to sinful men despiteous,
Nor of his speech dangerous nor dign,
But in his teaching discreet and benign.
To draw folk to heaven with fairness,
By good example, this was his business.
But if he knew any person obstinate,
Whether he were of high or low estate,
Him would he reprove sharply for the nonce.
A better priest I trow, no where there is,
He waited after no pomp nor reverence,
He made himself no spiced conscience,
But Christ's lore, and his apostles twelve
He taught, but first he followed it himself.

Chaucer's picture of the Plowman or farmer, the brother of this faithful minister, is also a pleasing relief to the many painful delineations in the preceding pages.

A true and good labourer was he,
Living in peace and perfect charity.
God loved he best with all his heart,
At all times, though him gamed or smart;
And then his neighbours right as himself.
He would thresh, and thereto dike and delve,
For Christ's sake, for every poor wight,
Without hire, if it lay in his might,
His tithes paid he full fair and well,
Both of his labour and his cattle.

These delineations no doubt were from the life. In another place Chaucer describes this parson stigmatized as a Lollard, because he reproved the profaneness of some of the company, while the other ecclesiastics then present encouraged their loose conduct. The tale he puts into the mouth of the plowman is a complaint of the dissolute, corrupt, and unscriptural lives of the romish clergy, in stronger terms than any in Wickliff's writings.

OF

FEIGNED CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE.

(From the MS. in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.)

When true men teach by God's law, understanding, and reason, that each priest ought to do his might, his understanding, and his will, to preach Christ's gospel, the fiend blindeth hypocrites to excuse themselves by feigned contemplative life; and to say that since it is the best, and they may not do both together, they need for the charity* of God, to leave the preaching of the gospel, and to live in contemplation! See now the hypocrisy of this false saying. Christ taught and did† the best life for priests, as our faith teaches, since he was God, and might not err. Christ preached the gospel, and charged all his apostles and disciples to go and preach the gospel to all men; then it is the best life for priests in this world, to preach the gospel.

Also God teacheth in the old law, that the office of a prophet is to show to the people their foul sins, and each priest is a prophet, as Gregory saith upon the gospels. Then it is the office of each priest to preach and tell the sins of the people, and in this manner shall each priest be an angel‡ of God, as holy writ saith.

Also Christ and John Baptist left the desert, and preached the gospel till their death, therefore this was the greatest charity, for else they were out of charity, or feigned charity; which could not be in either of them, since the one was God, and no man, after Christ, was holier than the Baptist, and he sinned not by preaching thus. Also the holy prophet Jeremiah might not be excused from preaching by his contemplation, but was charged of God to preach the sins of the people, and to suffer pain therefore, and so were all the prophets of God.

Since Christ and John Baptist, and all the prophets of God, were compelled by charity to come out of the desert to preach to the people, and to leave their solitary prayer, how dare we foolish heretics say that it is better to be still, and to pray our own foolish ordinance, than to preach Christ's

* Love. † Showed by his example. ‡ Messenger.

gospel? What accursed spirit of lies stirreth priests to close themselves in stones or walls for all their lives? Since Christ commanded all his apostles and priests to go into all the world and preach the gospel, certainly they are open fools, and plainly act against Christ's gospel. And if they maintain this error, they are cursed of him, and are perilous hypocrites and heretics.

Men are accounted heretics who act against the pope's law, and it saith plainly that each who cometh to the priesthood, takes the office of a beadle or crier, to go before doomsday, to proclaim to the people their sins and the vengeance of God. Why then are not the priests heretics who leave to preach Christ's gospel, and compel true men to leave preaching the gospel? since this law is St. Gregory's law, grounded openly on God's law, and reason, and charity; and the other law is contrary to holy writ, and reason and charity, for to maintain pride and covetousness of antichrist's worldly clerks.

But hypocrites allege from the gospel, that Mary chose to herself the best part when she sat beside Christ's feet, and heard his word. Truth it is that meek sitting, and devout hearing of Christ's word was best for Mary; for she had not the duty of preaching as priests have, since she was a woman that had not authority of God's law to teach and preach openly. But what is this to priests who have the express commandment of God and men to preach the gospel? whereas they would all be women in idleness, and follow not Jesus Christ in life and preaching of the gospel, which he himself commandeth both in the old law and the new.

Also, this peaceable hearing of Christ's word, and the burning love that Mary had, was the best part, for it shall end in living in godly life in this world. But in this life, the best life for priests is holy life, in keeping God's commands, and true preaching of the gospel, as Christ did, and charged all his priests to do. And these hypocrites suppose that their dreams and fantasies are contemplation, and that preaching of the gospel is active life, and so they mean that Christ took the worst life for this world, and required all his priests to leave the better, and take the worst life! Thus these foolish hypocrites put error upon Jesus Christ, but who are greater heretics?

Also these blind hypocrites allege that Christ bids us pray evermore, and that Paul bids that we pray without ceasing, and then, as they falsely feign, we priests may not

preach. But these hypocrites should know that Christ and Paul understood by this, prayer of holy life, which each man does as long as he dwells in charity; and not babbling of lips, which no man can ever do without ceasing; for else no man in this world might fulfil the commandment of Christ. Augustine and other saints teach this; and men that fulfil not God's law, and are out of charity, are not accepted in their lip preaching; for their prayer in lips is abominable, as holy writ saith by Solomon. These priests who preach not the gospel, as Christ biddeth, are not able to pray for mercy, but deceive themselves and the people, and despise God, and stir him to wrath and vengeance, as Augustine, Gregory, and other saints teach. And principally these hypocrites that have rents and worldly lordships, and parish churches appropriated to them by simony and falsities, against holy writ both old and new, and against Christ and his apostles, for pretended holiness, destroying of God's ordinance, and for profession made to fools, and perchance to fiends of hell.

These should learn what is active life and contemplative life, according to God's law, and then they might know that they have neither the one nor the other, since they consider more vain statutes of sinful men, and perchance of devils, than the commands of God, works of mercy, and points of charity. And the fiend blinds them so much, that they say in fact that they must never pray to please God, since they disable themselves to do the office of priests by God's law, and propose to end in their feigned devotion, which is blasphemy to God.*

* The following definitions of active and contemplative life, are given by Walter Hilton, a pious monk who lived soon after the death of Wickliff.

"The active life consists in love and charity exercised outwardly, by good corporeal works, in fulfilling of God's commandments, and of the seven works of mercy, bodily and spiritual, towards our christian brethren. This life pertains to all, be they learned or unlearned, laymen or spiritual persons, that are in office or state to govern, or have care of others; and generally all worldly men are bound to the practice of this kind of life, according to their best knowledge or ability, and as reason and discretion shall require.—Contemplative life consists in perfect love and charity, felt inwardly by spiritual virtues, and in a true and certain sight and knowledge of God, and spiritual matters. This life belongs to those especially, who for the love of God forsake all worldly riches, honours, worships, and outward businesses, and wholly give themselves, soul and body, according to all the knowledge and ability that is in them, to the service of God, by exercises of the soul."

This mistaken, though well designed preference of the contemplative to the active life, led to the abuses prevalent among the monastic orders, which are so strongly depictured by Wickliff and others.

ON PRAYER.

HOW PRAYER OF GOOD MEN HELPETH MUCH, AND HOW PRAYER OF SINFUL MEN DISPLEASETH GOD, AND HARMS THEMSELVES AND OTHER MEN.

(From the MS. in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.)

CHAPTER I.

Our Lord Jesus Christ teacheth us to pray evermore for all needful things, both for body and soul; for in the gospel of St. Luke Christ saith it is needful to pray evermore, and St. Paul bids christian men pray without ceasing or hinderance. And this is understood of prayer of charity,* and not of men's vows, as Augustine well declares, for else no man could fulfil this command to pray evermore. For as long as a man lives a just life, keeping God's commands and charity, so long he prayeth well, whatever he do; and whoever liveth best, he prayeth best. Also St. James saith, that the fervent and lasting prayer of a just man is of much worth. And while Moses was in the mount, and held up his hands, and prayed for his people, his people had victory over their enemies; and when he ceased to pray thus, his people were overcome, as the second book of holy writ teaches. So if priests dwell in the mount of high spiritual life, and espy deceits of the devil, and show them to the people by true preaching, and hold up their hands, that is open good works, and continue in them; and pray by fervent desire to perform righteousness of God's law and ordinance—then christian people shall have victory over the devil and cursed sin, then shall rest, and peace, and charity, dwell among them. And if priests cease this holy life and good example, and this desire of righteousness, then christian people shall be much overcome by sin, and have pestilence and wars, and wo enough; and unless God help, more endless wo in hell.

* Christian love.

King Hezekiah, by holy prayer and weeping and sorrow, got forgiveness of his sin, and fifteen years of his life; and the sun went back, or returned again ten lines on the dial, as Isaiah's book witnesses. Also by the prayer of the holy leader Joshua, the sun and moon stood still all day, to give light to pursue God's enemies, who desired to quench God's name, his law, and his people.

Therefore Christ saith to his disciples, If ye ask my Father any thing in my name, he shall give it to you; but we ask in the name of Jesus, when we ask any thing needful or profitable for the saving of men's souls, so that we ask this devoutly, of great desire, and wisely or humbly and lastingly,* by firm faith, true hope, and lasting charity, and whatever we ask thus, we shall have of the Father of heaven.

Also Christ saith thus in the gospel, evil men have wisdom. If ye give good things to your children, which good things are given you, how much more shall your Father, of heaven, give a good Spirit to men that ask him. Then, since kind† teaches sinful men to give goods to their children, how much more will God, author of goodness and charity, give spiritual goods, profitable to the soul, to his children whom he loves so much! Therefore ask of God heavenly things, as grace, will, wisdom, and power to serve God, to please him; and not for worldly goods, except as much as is needful to sustain thy life in truth and service of thy God.

Therefore, Christ teaches us that whatever we pray and ask for, we should believe and trust without any doubt, to have it, and it shall be given us; and if two or three of you consent together of any thing on earth that they should ask, it shall be given to them. Therefore, Christ taught and commanded us to pray the Lord's prayer, which is the best and plainest, and most sure prayer of all; for it contains all things needful and profitable for body and soul, and no error or singularity against God's will. And Jesus Christ made it, and commanded it in short words, that men should not be weary or heavy to say it, nor cumbered to learn it. And hereof a holy man blames men that leave the Lord's prayer which is taught and commanded of God, and choose singular prayers made of sinful men. And hereby it is plain that holy men, dwelling in love to God, and all men living on earth, both friends and enemies, christians and

* Perseveringly. † Nature, natural affection.

heathens, profit much by devout prayers, but most by holy life and fervent desire of righteousness.

CHAPTER II.

See now how wicked men's prayers displease God, and harm themselves and the people. God himself saith in this manner to evil men that pray to him in need; I have called, and ye have forsaken and have despised all my blamings, and I shall despise in your perishing, and shall scorn you. When that which ye have dreaded shall come to you, then ye shall call and I shall not hear, they shall raise heresies and they shall not find me, for they hated discipline, that is learning, and chastising. They retained not the fear of the Lord, and they assented not to my counsel, and they depraved and misdeemed* all my correction—that is reproving, warning, and chastising of sin. And by the prophet Isaiah, God saith thus to wicked men; Ye princes of Sodom, hear the Lord's word; people of Gomorrah, perceive with ears the law of our Lord God. Your incense is abomination to me. I shall not suffer your new moon, which is a principal feast and sabbath, and other feasts. Your companies are evil, my soul hath hated your feasts of months, and solemnities. They are made to me heavy and troublous, and when ye shall hold forth your hands I will turn mine eyes away from you. And when ye shall make many prayers I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood; that is of wrong, slaying of men, and foul sins.

Also, God saith that the prayer of that man who turneth away his ear that he hear not the law, is abominable and cursed. Also God saith by the prophet Malachi, and now to you priests, in this commandment, If ye will not hear, if ye will not put on your heart to give glory to my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I shall send unto you neediness, and shall curse your blessings, and I shall curse them, for ye have not set this commandment on your heart. Lo, I shall cast toward you the arm, and spread abroad upon your face the filth of your solemnities. By the same prophet, God also saith to priests and ministers of the temple, Who is among you that will sit and incense mine altar willingly and without reward? The Lord of hosts saith, There is

* Misrepresented and misconceived.

no will to me among you, and I shall receive no gifts of sacrifice of your hand. And God saith to priests by the same prophet, Ye have covered the altar of the Lord with tears, and weeping, and mourning of widows and poor men whom ye oppress and deceive; so that I shall no more be holden to the sacrifice, and I shall not receive any pleasant thing of your hand. Therefore David saith, If I have beholden wickedness in my heart, the Lord shall not hear by grace; that is, if I wilfully and gladly do wickedness. God saith to the sinful man, Why tellest thou my righteousness, and takest my testament in thy mouth? And the Holy Ghost saith of Judas Iscariot, His prayer was made into sin; and our Lord Jesus saith, This people worship me with lips, but their heart is far from me, but they teach learning and commandments of men, worshipping me without cause—that is such men as teach and charge men's laws and traditions and commandments, more than holy writ and God's commandments; vainly and falsely worship God. Also Jesus saith to wicked men, Why say ye to me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I commanded; for Jesus saith, Wo to you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, that devour widows' houses, praying long prayers, therefore ye shall receive greater judgment. And in the gospel of St. John is written thus, Ye know that God heareth not sinful men, but if any man worship God, and doeth his will, God heareth him. And when a priest, void of good life and charity, sayeth his service, and maketh the sacrament, he eateth and drinketh his own condemnation; not considering wisely the body of our Lord, as St. Paul teaches, and holy writ. Therefore Chrysostom, on the gospel of St. Matthew, saith, "As a thing may be without odour or savour, but there may not be odour without some thing, so a good deed without prayer is somewhat, but prayer without good deed is nought." St. Augustine, on the Psalter, saith, "If you pass measure in meat and drink, and live in gluttony and drunkenness, whatever the tongue speak, the life blasphemeth God." Therefore St. Paul saith, Many men acknowledge that they know God, but by their deeds they deny God.

St. Gregory writes thus in many books, A man that is in grievous sins, while he is overcharged with his own, he doth not put away other men's sins; for it is known to all men, that when he that despiseth is sent forth to pray, the heart of him that is worthy is stirred to more displeasure.

Truly it is written, The sacrifices of wicked men are abominable to the Lord, the vows of sacrifices of just men are pleasant. For in the doom of God Almighty it is not sought, what is given, but of whom. Therefore it is written in holy writ, The Lord looked to Abel and his gifts. When Moses would say that the Lord took reward to gifts, he carefully set before, that God beheld Abel; whence it is shown plainly that the offerer pleased not of gifts, but gifts pleased of the offerer or giver.

The mighty God approveth not the gifts of wicked men, nor looketh on their offerings, nor shall have mercy on sinners for the multitude of their sacrifices; also the Lord is far from wicked men, and he shall graciously hear the prayers of just men. All this saith St. Gregory.

CHAPTER III.

[WICKLIFF here shows "how strict is man's law against sinful man's prayer," and refers at considerable length to the various laws and ordinances made against unchaste, and even against married priests, commanding the people not to listen to their prayers or saying of divine service. He then proceeds]—

Much more should these penalties be for greater sins, for the more grievous sin deserves more punishment. For pride makes men forsake God, the King of meekness, and take Lucifer for their false king, as God saith in holy writ. And envy and wrath make men forsake the God of charity, mercy, and patience, and become children of Belial, as God's law, reason, and saints, teach. Covetousness and usury make men forsake God of truth and righteousness, and worship false gods, as St. Paul saith. Gluttony and drunkenness make men to worship false gods, and forsake Almighty God in Trinity, who is God of measure* and reason; for Paul saith that gluttony makes the belly its god. And evil example to christian men is worse than bodily sin, as God's law witnesses, and as is said by Grosthead, as God's word and man's soul are better than man's body.

Manslaying is not only by deed of hand but also by consent and counsel and authority, and since priests thus

* Moderation.

consent to false wars* and many thousand deaths, they are cursed mankillers and irregular, both by God's law and man's.

[Wickliff then condemns simony, and says, in strong terms]—

Whoever cometh to this order or benefice (of the christian ministry) must by meekness seek God's worship, and help of christian souls, and for devotion to live in holiness and give good example. But he that comes to this order to live in pride and lusts of the flesh, as idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, and lechery, comes not in by Christ but by the fiend, and is a traitor to God, and a heretic, till he amend this intent, and do well this spiritual office, as Christ taught. And full few are holy to pray for the people, for the greatness of their own sins enter here, and evil countenance and maintenance, and excusing of their sin, and other men's sin, for money and worldly praise, against God in his righteous judgment, and for hard enduring in their sins.

CHAPTER IV.

But against these laws, both God's and man's, and reason and saints, the fiend teaches his disciples a new gloss;† to say that though men are not worthy to be heard in praying, for their own good life, yet their prayer is heard for the merit of holy church, for they are procurators‡ of the church. Certainly this is a foul and subtle deceit of antichrist's clerks, to colour their sin.

[Wickliff then notices again the subject of the last chapter, and "the sophistries of antichrist," which make the efficacy of the sacrament to depend upon the intention and the holiness of the priest; he then notices the Latin and choral services of the Romish church at that period.]

Wonder it is why men praise so much this new praying by great crying and high song, and leave the still manner of praying as Christ and his apostles did. It seems that we seek our own liking and pride in this song, more than the devotion and understanding of that which we sing. This is great sin, for Augustine saith in his confessions, "As oft as the song delights me more than that which is sung, so oft I acknowledge that I trespass grievously." Therefore

* The wars excited by the popes. † Interpretation.
‡ Proctors, agents.

saith Paul, I had rather five words in understanding than ten thousand in tongue. Paul's will is for devotion and true understanding. In tongue, is what a man understands not, and has no devotion. The Lord's prayer, once said with devotion and good understanding, is better than many thousand without devotion and understanding.* And this new praying occupies men so much that they have no space to study holy writ, and teach it. But Augustine asks who may and shall excuse himself from preaching and seeking the saving of souls for love of contemplation ;† since Jesus Christ came from heaven into this wretched world, to seek souls, and save them by open example of holy life and true preaching. And Gregory saith in his pastorals, They that have plenty of virtues and knowledge of God's law, and go into a desert for sake of contemplation, are guilty of as many souls as they might profit by instructing men living in this world. Where shall this new song excuse us from learning and preaching the gospel that Christ taught and commanded? Therefore ye that are priests live well, pray devoutly, and teach the gospel truly and freely, as Christ and his apostles did. Amen.

In his tract On the Song of the Ordinal of Salisbury, Wickliff much reproves the light singing then newly introduced in public worship, which he says, "hinders much the preaching of the gospel;" and adds, "If all the study and labour that men have now, about Salisbury use, with multitudes of new costly portesses, and all other such books, were turned into making of bibles, and in studying and teaching thereof, how much should God's law be furthered, and known, and kept! And now it is so much hindered, unstudied, and unkept. How should rich men be excused that spend so much in great chapelries, and costly books of men's ordinance, for fame of the world, and will not spend so much about books of God's law, and to study them, and teach them, since this were without comparison better, easier, and safer?"

* The people were taught to repeat the Lord's prayer in Latin many times over, without understanding the meaning of the words they uttered.

† Because he prefers a monastic life.

A SHORT RULE OF LIFE.

FOR EACH MAN IN GENERAL, AND FOR PRIESTS, AND LORDS, AND LABOURERS, IN PARTICULAR, HOW EACH SHALL BE SAVED IN HIS DEGREE.

(*From the MS. in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.*)

First, When thou risest, or fully wakest, think upon the goodness of thy God; how for his own goodness, and not for any need, he made all things out of nothing, both angels and men, and all other creatures, good in their kind.

The second time, think on the great sufferings, and willing death that Christ suffered for mankind. When no man might make satisfaction for the guilt of Adam and Eve, and others more, neither any angel might make satisfaction therefore, then Christ, of his endless charity, suffered such great passion and painful death, that no creature could suffer so much.

Think the third time, how God hath saved thee from death and other mischief, and suffered many thousands to be lost that night, some in water, some in fire, and some by sudden death; and some to be damned without end. And for this goodness and mercy thank thy God with all thine heart. And pray him to give thee grace to spend in that day, and evermore, all the powers of thy soul, as mind, understanding, reason, and will; and all the powers of thy body, as strength, beauty, and thy five senses, in his service and worship, and in nothing against his commandments; but in ready performance of his works of mercy, and to give good example of holy life, both in word and deed, to all men about thee.

Look afterward that thou be well occupied, and no time idle, for the danger of temptation. Take meat and drink in measure,* not too costly nor too lickerous, and be not too curious thereabout. But such as God sendeth thee

* Moderation.

with health, take it in such measure that thou be fresher in mind and understanding to serve God. And always thank him for such gifts. Besides this, look thou do right and equity to all men, thy superiors, equals, and subjects or servants; and stir all to love truth, and mercy, and true peace, and charity; and suffer no men to be at dissension, but accord them if thou canst in any good manner.

Also, most of all fear God and his wrath; and most of all love God and his law, and his worship; and ask not principally for worldly reward, but in all thine heart desire the bliss of heaven in mercy of God, and thine own good life; and think much of the dreadful doom of pains of hell, to keep thee out of sin; and on the endless great joys of heaven, to keep thee in virtuous life; and according to thy skill teach others the same doing.

In the end of the day think wherein thou hast offended God, and how much and how oft, and therefore have entire sorrow, and amend it while thou mayest. And think how many God hath suffered to perish that day, many ways, and to be damned everlastingly, and how graciously he hath saved thee; not for thy desert, but for his own mercy and goodness, and therefore thank him with all thine heart. And pray him for grace that thou mayest dwell and end in his true and holy service and real love, and to teach other men the same doing.

If thou art A PRIEST, and especially a curate,* live thou holily, surpassing other men in holy prayer, desire, and thinking, in holy speaking, counselling, and true teaching. And that God's commands, his gospel, and virtues, be ever in thy mouth; and ever despise sin to draw men therefrom; and that thy deeds be so rightful that no man shall blame them with reason, but that thy open deeds be a true book to all subjects and unlearned men, to serve God and do his commands thereby. For example of good life, open and lasting, more stirreth rude men than true preaching by word only. And waste not thy goods in great feasts of rich men, but live a humble life, of poor men's alms and goods, both in meat, and drink, and clothes; and the remainder give truly to poor men that have not of their own, and may not labour for feebleness or sickness, and thus thou shalt be a true priest both to God and man.

If thou art A LORD,† look that thou live a rightful life in

* One having the charge of souls.

† Or master, one having authority over others.

thine own person, both in respect to God and man, keeping the commands of God, doing the works of mercy, ruling well thy five senses, and doing reason, and equity, and good conscience to all men. In the second place, govern well thy wife, thy children, and thy household attendants, in God's law, and suffer no sin among them, neither in word nor in deed, that they may be examples of holiness and righteousness to all others; for thou shalt be condemned for their evil life and their evil example, unless thou amend it according to thy might. In the third place, govern well thy tenants, and maintain them in right and reason, and be merciful to them in their rents and worldly mercements,* and suffer not thine officers to do them wrong nor be extortionate to them. And chastise in good manner them that are rebels against God's commands and virtuous life, more than for rebellion against thine own cause; or else for that thou lovest more thine own cause than God's, and thyself more than God Almighty, thou wert then a false traitor to God. And love, reward, praise, and cherish the true and virtuous of life more than if thou sought only thine own profit. And reverence and maintain truly, according to thy skill and might, God's law and true preachers thereof, and God's servants, in rest and peace. For thereby thou holdest the lordship of God,† and if thou failest of this thou misdoest against God, and all thy lordship, in body and in soul. And principally if thou maintainest antichrist's disciples in their errors against Christ's life and his teaching, for blindness, covetousness, and worldly friendship; and helpest to slander and pursue true men that teach Christ's gospel and his life, and warn the people of their great sins, and of false prophets and hypocrites that deceive christian men in faith, virtuous life, and worldly goods.

If thou art A LABOURER, live in meekness, and truly and willingly do thy labour, that thy lord or thy master if he be a heathen man, by thy meekness, willing and true service, may not have to grudge against thee, nor slander thy God, nor thy christian profession; but rather be stirred to come to christianity. And serve not christian lords with grudgings; not only in their presence, but truly and willingly, and in absence. Not only for worldly dread, or worldly reward, but for dread of God and conscience, and for reward in heaven. For God that putteth thee in such service knoweth what state is best for thee, and will reward

* Payments. † Thou dost reverence the power of God.

thee more than all earthly lords may, if thou dost it truly and willingly for his ordinance. And in all things beware of grudging against God and his visitation, in great labour, and long or great sickness, and other adversities. And beware of wrath, of cursing, of speaking evil, of banning* man or beast; and ever keep patience, meekness, and charity, both to God and man.

And thus each man in the three states ought to live, to save himself, and to help others; and thus should good life, rest, peace, and love, be among christian men, and they be saved, and heathen men soon converted, and God magnified greatly in all nations and sects that now despise him and his law, for the false living of wicked christian men.

The writings of Wickliff and his disciples fully show they had no desire to interrupt the mutual dependence, due subordination of ranks, and attention of every one to his vocation, taught in scripture. The following extract is from a sermon preached by R. Wimbledon, A. D. 1388, which has by some been ascribed to Wickliff. After showing that "every estate should love other," he proceeds thus: "And men of one craft should neither hate nor despise men of any other craft. For one is so needful to another, that oftentimes those crafts that seem least desirable might worst be forborne. And thus I dare say, that he who is not labouring in this world, either in praying or preaching, as behoves priests, for the health of the people; or in defending the causes of the needy against tyrants and enemies, which is the office of knights; or in labouring on the earth, which pertains to the commons; when the day of reckoning shall come, that is at the end of this life, right as he lived here without labour or travail, so shall he want there the reward of his penny, Matt. xx. 2. that is the endless joys of heaven. Wherefore let every man see to what state God hath called him, and live therein by labour, according to his degree. They that are labouring men, or craftsmen, let them do it truly. If thou art a servant, or a bondman, be subject, and live in dread to displease thy master or lord, for Christ's sake. If thou art a merchant, deceive not thy brother in chaffering. If thou art a knight or a lord, defend the poor and needy man from such as would harm him."

* To exclaim against, or curse.

WICKLIFF'S WICKET:

WHICH HE

MADE IN KING RICHARD THE SECOND'S DAYS.*

Ihon the VI. Chapiter.

I am the lyuynge breade whych came downe from heauen: who so etethe of this brede shall lyue for euer. And the brede that I wyll gyue is my flesche, whyche I wyll gyue for the lyfe of the worlde.

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* The Wicket is here reprinted from the edition of Norenberch, (Nuremberg) 1546, compared with the edition of Oxford, 1612. Some of the readings of the latter are adopted to render the meaning more clear. The frequent notices of this tract in the articles exhibited against the Lollards, and in the proclamations against heretical books, show that its circulation must have been extensive, and its influence considerable.

WICKLIFF'S WICKET.

A VERY BRIEF DEFINITION OF THESE WORDS,

HOC EST CORPUS MEUM.

(THIS IS MY BODY.)

I beseech ye brethren in the Lord Christ Jesus, and for the love of his Spirit, to pray with me, that we may be vessels to his laud and praise what time soever it pleaseth him to call upon us, Rom. xv.

FORASMUCH as our Saviour Jesus Christ, when he walked here on earth with the prophets which were before him, and the apostles which were present with him, whom also he left after him, whose hearts were mollified with the Holy Ghost, warned us, and gave us knowledge that there were two manner of ways—the one to life, the other to death, as Christ saith in the gospels, How strait and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and there be but few that find it. But how large and broad is the way that leadeth to damnation, and there are many that go in thereat, Matt. vii. Luke xiii. Therefore pray we heartily to God, that he, of his mere mercy, will so strengthen us with the grace and stedfastness of his Holy Spirit, to make us strong in spiritual living, after the evangelical gospel—so that the world —no not the very infidels, papists, and apostates—can gather occasion to speak evil of us, but that we may enter into that strait gate,* as Christ our Saviour and all that follow him have done. That is, not in idle living, but in diligent labouring, yea, in great sufferance of persecution even to the death, and that we find the way of everlasting life, as he hath promised, where he saith, He that seeketh findeth, and he that asketh receiveth, and to him that knocketh it shall be

* Or wicket, hence the title of this tract.

opened, Matt. vii. Also Christ saith, If thy son ask thee for bread, wilt thou give him a stone? or if he ask thee fish, wilt thou give him a serpent? If ye which are evil can give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give a good spirit to them that ask it of him, Luke xi. Saint James saith, If any man lack wisdom let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men if they ask it in faith, and upbraideth none; for he that doubteth is like to the waves of the sea, that are borne about with every blast of wind. Think not that such shall receive anything of the Lord. For a man double in soul is unstable in all his ways, as it is written.

Wherefore let us pray to God that he keep us in the hour of temptation, which is coming upon all the world, Rev. iii. For as our Saviour Christ saith, When ye see that abomination of desolation which is spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place, as Christ saith, He that readeth let him understand, Matt. xxiv. But because that every man cannot have the book of Daniel to know what his prophecy is, here are his words, Toward the last days the king of the north shall come, and the arms of him shall stand, and shall defile the sanctuary, and he shall take away the continual sacrifice, and he shall give abomination unto desolation, and wicked men shall find a testament guilefully, but they that know their God shall hold and do; and learned men in the people shall teach full many men, and they shall fall on the sword, and into flame, and into captivity many days, and when they fall down they shall be raised by a little help, and full many shall be joined to them deceitfully, and some learned men shall fall to them so that they build together, and the chosen shall be together, and shall be made white till a time determined. For yet another time shall be, and the king shall do by his will, and then he shall be raised, and magnified against each god. And against the God of gods shall he speak great things, and he shall be raised till the wrathfulness before determined is perfectly made, and he shall not inherit the God of his fathers, and he shall be in the company of women, and he shall not regard any thing of God's, for he shall raise against all things. Forsooth he shall honour the god of Mason* in his place, and he shall worship a god whom his fathers knew not, with gold, silver, precious

* The god of forces, Mauzim. This quotation is from Daniel xi. 31—39.

stones, and with precious things. But he shall do to make strong the god of Mason with the alien, or strange god, which he knew, and he shall multiply his glory, and he shall give to them power in many things, and he shall depart the land at his will. Hitherto are the words of Daniel. Who may see a greater abomination than to see the people led away from God, and taught to worship for God, that which is not God nor Saviour of the world? For though it be their god, as it is written by a prophet, saying,* The Lord's going shall make low the gods of the earth, for their gods that they believe in may not make them safe; and as it is written by St. Paul, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things I see you as vain worshippers of idols; for I passed by and saw your mawmetes,† and found an altar in the which was written, To the unknown God. Therefore the thing which you know not ye worship as God. This thing show I unto you: God which made the world and all things that are in it. This forsooth, he is Lord of heaven and of earth, and he dwelleth not in the temple made with hands, neither hath he need of any thing, for he giveth life to all men, and breath everywhere, and he made of one all kinds of men, to inhabit on all the face of the earth. Determining times ordained and terms of the dwelling of them to seek out God, if peradventure they might find him, although he be not far from each of you. And again he saith, Ye shall not think that the living God is like to gold, silver, either any thing graven or painted by craft, either taught of man; for God despiseth the time of the unknown things.

And he showeth every where that all men should do penance,‡ and hereof the clerks of the law have great need, which have been ever against God the Lord, both in the old law and in the new, to slay the prophets that speak to them the word of God. Ye see that they spared not the Son of God, when the temporal judge would have delivered him, Matt. xxvii. and so forth of the apostles and martyrs that have spoken truly the word of God to them. And they say it is heresy to speak of the holy scripture in English, and so they would condemn the Holy Ghost who gave it in tongues to the apostles of Christ, to speak the word of God in all languages that were ordained of God under heaven, as it is written, Acts xi. And the Holy Ghost descended upon the heathen, as he did upon the apostles in

* Zeph. ii. 11. † Images. ‡ Repent.

Jerusalem, as it is written, Joel ii. and Christ was so merciful as to send the Holy Ghost to the heathen men, Acts viii. x. and he made them partakers of his blessed word; why then should it be taken away from us in this land that are christian men?

Consider you whether it is not all one to deny Christ's words for heresy, and Christ for an heretic; for if my word be a lie, then am I a liar that speak the word. Therefore, if my words be heresy, then am I an heretic that speak the word; therefore it is all one to condemn the word of God in any language for heresy, and God for an heretic, who spake the word. For he and his word are all one, and they may not be separated; and if the word of him be the life of the world, as it is written, Not only by bread liveth man, but in every word that cometh out of the mouth of God, Matt. iv. and every word of God is the life of the soul of man, as saith St. John, thou hast anointing of the Holy Ghost, and thou hast no need of any man to teach you in all things which is his blessed word, in which is all wisdom and knowledge, and yet ye are always to learn as well as we. How may any antichrist, for dread of God, take it away from us that are christian men, and thus suffer the people to die for hunger in heresy and blasphemy of man's law, that corrupteth and slayeth the soul, as pestilence slayeth the body, as David beareth witness, where he speaketh of the chair of pestilence.

And most of all they make us believe a false law that they have made upon the sacred host,* for the most false belief is taught in it. For where find ye that ever Christ, or any of his disciples or apostles, taught any man to worship it? For in the mass creed† it is said, I believe in one God only, our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, only begotten and born of the Father before all the world; he is God of God, Light of light, very God of very God, begotten and not made, and of substance even with the Father, by whom all things are made. And in the psalm Quicunque vult,‡ it is said, The Father is God, The Son is God, The Holy Ghost is God. The Father is unmade,§ The Son is unmade, and The Holy Ghost is unmade. And thou then that art an earthly man, by what reason mayest thou say that thou makest thy Maker? Whether may the thing that is made say to the maker, Why hast thou made

* The wafer, or consecrated bread, given at the sacrament.
† The Nicene creed. ‡ The Athanasian creed. § Uncreated.

me thus? Or may it turn again and make him that made it? Surely not. Now answerest thou that sayest that every day thou makest of bread, the body of the Lord, flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, God and man. Forsooth thou answerest greatly against reason, by those words that Christ spake at his supper on Serethursday* at night, Matt. xxvi. Mark xiv. that Christ took bread and blessed it and brake it, and gave it to his disciples and apostles, and said, Take ye, and eat ye, this is my body which shall be given for you. And also he, taking the cup, gave thanks, and gave to them, and said, Drink ye all hereof, this is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed out for many to the remission of sins; as saith Luke, When Jesus had taken bread, he gave thanks and brake it to them and said, Take ye, eat ye, this my body that shall be given for you, do ye this in remembrance of me.

Now understand ye the words of our Saviour Christ, as he spake them one after another—as Christ spake them. For he took bread and blessed, and yet what blessed he? The scripture saith not that Christ took bread and blessed it, or that he blessed the bread which he had taken. Therefore it seemeth more that he blessed his disciples and apostles, whom he had ordained witnesses of his passion; and in them he left his blessed word which is the bread of life, as it is written, Not only in bread liveth man, but in every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, Matt. iv. Also Christ saith, I am the bread of life that came down from heaven, John vi. And Christ saith also in John, The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. Therefore it seemeth more that he blessed his disciples, and also his apostles, in whom the bread of life was left more than in material bread, for the material bread hath an end. As it is written in the gospel of Matthew xv. that Christ said, All things that a man eateth go down into the belly, and are sent down into the draught; but the blessing of Christ kept his disciples and apostles, both bodily and ghostly. As it is written, that none of them perished but the son of perdition, that the scriptures might be fulfilled, John xvii. and often the scripture saith that Jesus took bread and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take ye, eat ye, this is my body that shall be given for you. But he said not this bread is my body, or that the bread should be given for the life of the world.

* The Thursday before Easter.

For Christ saith, What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, John vi. Also Christ saith in the gospel, Verily, verily I say unto you, except the wheat corn fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.

Here men may see by the words of Christ, that it behoved that he died in the flesh, and that in his death was made the fruit of everlasting life for all them that believe on him, as it is written. For as by Adam all die, even so by Christ shall all live, and every man in his own order; for as one clearness is in the sun, another in the moon, and a star in clearness is nothing in comparison to the sun. Even so is the again rising of the dead, for we are sown in corruption and shall rise again incorruptible, we are sown in infirmity, and shall rise again in strength; we are sown in natural bodies, and shall rise again spiritual bodies. Then if Christ shall change thus our deadly* bodies by death, and God the Father spared not his own Son, as it is written, but that death should reign in him as in us, and that he should be translated into a spiritual body, as the first again rising of dead men. Then how say the hypocrites that take on them to make our Lord's body? Make they the glorified body? Either make they again the spiritual body which is risen from death to life? or make they the fleshly body as it was before he suffered death? And if they say also that they make the spiritual body of Christ, it may not be so, for what Christ said and did, he did as he was at supper before he suffered his passion; as it is written that the spiritual body of Christ rose again from death to life, Matt. xxviii. Also that he ascended up to heaven, and that he will abide there till he come to judge the quick and the dead. And if they say that they make Christ's body as it was before he had suffered his passion, then must they needs grant that Christ is to die yet. For by all holy scriptures he was promised to die, and that he should give lordship of everlasting life.

Furthermore, if they say that Christ made his body of bread, I ask, With what words made he it? Not with these words, "*Hoc est corpus meum;*" that is to say in English, "This is my body," for they are the words of giving, and not of making, which he said after that he brake the bread; then parting it among his disciples and

* Mortal.

apostles. Therefore if Christ had made of that bread his body, [he] had made it in his blessing, or else in giving of thanks, and not in the words of giving; for if Christ had spoken of the material bread that he had in his hands when he said, "*Hoc est corpus meum*," "This is my body;" it was made before, or else the word had been a lie. For if I say, This is my hand, and if it be not a hand, then am I a liar, therefore seek carefully if ye can find two words of blessing, or of giving of thanks, wherewith Christ made his body and blood of the bread and wine. And that all the clerks of the earth know not, for if ye might find or know those words, then should ye wax great masters above Christ, and then ye might be givers of his substance, and as fathers and makers of him, and that he should worship you, as it is written, Thou shalt worship thy father and mother, Exod. xx. Of such as desire such worship against God's law, speaketh St. Paul of the man of sin that enhanceth* himself as if he were God. And he is worshipped over all things as God, and showeth himself, as he were God. Where our clergy are guilty in this, judge ye or they that know most, for they say that when ye have said, "Hoc est corpus meum," that is to say, "This is my body;" which ye call the words of consecration, or else of making; and when they are said over the bread, ye say, that there is left no bread, but it is the body of the Lord. But truly there is† nothing but a heap of accidents, as witness ruggedness, roundness, savour, touching and tasting, and such other accidents. Then, if thou sayest that the flesh and blood of Christ, that is to say, his manhood, is made more, or increased by so much as the ministration of bread and wine is, the which ye minister—if ye say it is so—then thou must needs consent that the thing which is not God to-day shall be God to-morrow; yea, and that thing which is without spirit of life, but groweth in the field by kind, shall be God at another time. And we all ought to believe that he was without beginning, and without ending; and not made, for if the manhood of Christ were increased every day by so much as the bread and wine draweth to that ye minister, he should increase more in one day by cart loads than he did in thirty-two years when he was here on earth.‡

* Advanceth.

† So that in the bread there remaineth. Ed. 1612.

‡ A plain artificer, John Badby, a tailor, burned in Smithfield in 1409, in the presence of the prince of Wales, afterwards Henry V.,

And if thou makest the body of the Lord in those words, "*Hoc est corpus meum;*" that is to say, "This is my body." And if thou mayest make the body of the Lord in those words, "This is *my* body," thou thyself must be the person of Christ, or else there is a false God; for if it be thy body as thou sayest, then is it the body of a false knave or of a drunken man, or of a thief, or of a lecherer or full of other sins, and then there is an unclean body for any man to worship for God! For even if Christ had made there his body of material bread in the said words, as I know they are not the words of making, what earthly man had power to do as he did? For in all holy scripture, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Apocalypse, there are no words written of the making of Christ's body; but there are written that Christ was the Son of the Father, and that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and that he took flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, and that he was dead, and that he rose again from death on the third day, and that he ascended to heaven very God and man, and that we should believe in all scriptures that are written of him, and that he is to come to judge the quick and the dead, and that the same Christ Jesus, King and Saviour, was at the beginning with the Father and the Holy Ghost, making all things of nought, both heaven and earth, and all things that are therein; working by word of his virtue,* for he said, Be it done, and it was done, Gen. i. whose works never earthly man might comprehend, either make. And yet the words of the making of these things are written in the beginning of Genesis, even as God spake them; and if ye cannot make the work that he made, and have the word by which he made it, how shall ye make him that made the works? You have no words of authority or power left you on earth by which ye should do this, but ye have feigned this craft of your false errors, which some of you understand not; for it is prophesied, Isaiah vi. xlii. Matt. xiii. Luke viii. and Mark iv. They shall have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not; and shall see prophecies, and shall not understand, lest they be converted; for I hide them from the hearts of those people; their hearts are

argued with his judges that John the baker of Bristol had as much power to make *such* a body of Christ, as any priest whatever. Also that if every wafer consecrated at the altar were the Lord's body, there were at that time twenty thousand gods in England. But he believed, he said, in one Lord God omnipotent, in Trinity.

* Power.

greatly fatted. And this thing is done to you for the wickedness of your errors in unbelief; therefore be ye converted from the worst sin, as it is written, When Moses was in the hill with God, Exod. xxxii. the people made a calf and worshipped it as God. And God spake to Moses, Go, for the people have done the worst sin to make and worship alien gods.

But now I shall ask you a word; answer ye me, Whether is the body of the Lord made at once or at twice? Is both the flesh and the blood in the host of the bread? or else is the flesh made at one time, and the blood made at other time; that is to say the wine in the chalice? If thou wilt say it is full and wholly the manhood of Christ in the host of bread, both flesh and blood, skin, hair, and bones, then makest thou us to worship a false god in the chalice, which is unconjured when ye worship the bread; and if ye say the flesh is in the bread, and the blood in the wine, then thou must grant, if thy craft be true, as it is not indeed, that the manhood of Christ is parted, and that he is made at two times. For first thou takest the host of bread, or a piece of bread, and makest it as ye say, and the innocent people* worship it. And then thou takest to thee the chalice, and likewise marrest, makest, I would have said, the blood in it, and then they worship it also, and if it be so as I am sure that the flesh and blood of Christ ascended, then are ye false harlots† to God and to us; for when we shall be houselled‡ ye bring to us the dry flesh, and let the blood be away; for ye give us after the bread, wine and water, and sometimes clean water unblessed, or rather conjured, by the virtue of your craft; and yet ye say, under the host of bread is the full manhood of Christ. Then by your own confession must it needs be that we worship a false god in the chalice, which is unconjured when we worship the bread, and worship the one as the other; but where find ye that ever Christ or any of his disciples taught any man to worship this bread or wine?

Therefore, what shall we say of the apostles that were so much with Christ, and were called by the Holy Ghost; had they forgotten to set it in the creed when they made it, which is christian men's belief? Or else we might say that they knew no such God, for they believe in no more gods but in Him that was at the beginning, and made of

* Simple, ignorant people. † False servants, cheats.
‡ Receive the sacrament.

nought all things visible and invisible, Heb. i. Ps. cii. which Lord took flesh and blood, being in the virgin, the same God. But ye have many false ways, to beguile the innocent people with sleights of the fiend.

For ye say that in every host each piece is the whole manhood of Christ, or full substance of him. For ye say as a man may take a glass, and break the glass into many pieces, and in every piece properly thou mayest see thy face, and yet thy face is not parted. So ye say the Lord's body is in each host or piece, and his body is not parted. And this is a full subtle question to beguile an innocent fool, but will ye take heed of this subtle question, how a man may take a glass and behold the very likeness of his own face, and yet it is not his face, but the likeness of his face? for if it were his very face, then he must needs have two faces, one on his body and another in the glass! And if the glass were broken in many places, so there should be many faces more by the glass than by the body, and each man shall make as many faces to them as they would; but as ye may see the mind or likeness of your face, which is not the very face, but the figure thereof, so the bread is the figure or mind of Christ's body in earth, and therefore Christ said, As oft as ye do this thing do it in mind of me, Luke xxii.

Also ye say this, As a man may light many candles at one candle, and yet the light of that candle is never the more nor ever the less. So ye say that the manhood of Christ descendeth into each part of every host, and the manhood of Christ is never the more nor less. Where then becometh your ministrations? For if a man light many candles at one candle, as long as they burn there will be many candles lighted, and as well the last candle as the first; and so by this reason, if ye shall fetch your word at God, and make God, there must needs be many gods, and that is forbidden in the first commandment, Exod. xx. And as for making more, either making less, of Christ's manhood, it lieth not in your power to come there nigh, neither to touch it, for it is ascended into heaven in a spiritual body, Matt. xxviii. which he suffered not Mary Magdalen to touch, when her sins were forgiven to her.

Therefore all the sacraments that are left here in earth are but minds of the body of Christ, for a sacrament is no more to say but a sign or mind of a thing passed, or a thing to come; for when Jesus spake of the bread, and said to his disciples, Luke xxii. As ye do this thing, do it in

mind of me, it was set for a mind of good things passed of Christ's body; but when the angel showed to John, Apocalypse xvii. the sacraments of the woman and of the beast that bare her, it was set for a mind of evil things to come on the face of the earth, and great destroying of the people of God. And in the old law there were many figures or minds of things to come. For before Christ, circumcision was commanded by a law; and he that kept not the law was slain. And yet St. Paul saith, Rom. ii. And neither is it circumcision that is openly in the flesh, but he that is circumcised of heart in spirit, not the letter whose praising is not of men, but of God. Peter saith in the third chapter of his epistle, And so baptism of like form maketh not us safe, but the putting away of the filthiness of the flesh, and the having of good conscience in God by the again rising of our Lord Jesus Christ from death, that we should be made heirs of everlasting life, he went up into heaven, and angels, and powers, and virtues, are made subjects to him.

And also the scripture saith of John Baptist, Matt. iii. that he preached in the wilderness and said, A stronger than I shall come after me, and I am not worthy to kneel down and unlace his shoe; and yet Christ said that he was more than a prophet. See also Isaiah xl. Matt. xi. How may ye then say that ye are worthy to make his body, and yet your works bear witness that ye are less than the prophets, for if ye were not, ye should not teach the people to worship the sacraments or minds* of Christ for Christ himself; which sacraments or figures are lawful as God taught them and left them unto us, as the sacrifices or minds of the old law were full good. As it is written, They that kept them should live in them, Paul, Rom. x. And so the bread that Christ brake was left to us for mind of things passed for the body of Christ, that we should believe he was a very man in kind as we are, but as God in power, and that his manhood was sustained by food as ours. For St. Paul saith he was very man, and in form he was found as man. And so we must believe that he was very God and very man together, and that he ascended up very God and very man to heaven, and that he shall be there till he come to doom the world. And we may not see him bodily, being in this life, as it is written Peter i. For he sayeth, Whom ye have not ye love, into whom ye now not seeing believe. And John

* Remembrances.

saith in the first chapter of his gospel, No man saw God; none but the only begotten Son that is in the bosom of the Father, he hath told it out. And John saith in his first epistle, the third chapter, Every man that sinneth seeth not him, neither knoweth him. By what reason then say ye that are sinners, that ye make God? truly this must needs be the worst sin, to say that ye make God, and it is the abomination of discomfort, that is said in Daniel the prophet to be standing in the holy place; he that readeth let him understand.

Also Luke saith, chap. xxii. that Christ took the cup after that he had supped, and gave thanks and said, This cup is the new testament in my blood that shall be shed into the remission of sins for man. Now, what say ye; the cup which he said was the new testament in his blood, was it a material cup in which the wine was that he gave his disciples wine of, or was it his most blessed body in which the blessed blood was kept till it was shed out for the sins of them that should be made safe by his passion. Needs must we say that he spake of his holy body, as he did when he called his passion or suffering in body a cup, when he prayed to his Father, before he went to his passion, Matt. xxvi. and said, If it be possible that this cup pass from me, but if thou wilt that I drink it, thy will be done. He spake not here of the material cup in which he had given his disciples drink; for it troubled not him, but he prayed for his great sufferance and bitter death, the which he suffered for our sins and not for his own. And if he spake of his holy body and passion when he said, This cup is the new testament in my blood, so he spake of his holy body, when he said, This is my body which shall be given for you, and not of the material bread which he had in his hand. Also in another place he calleth his passion a cup, Matt. xx. where the mother of Zebedee's sons came to him, and asked of him that her two sons, when he came to his kingdom, might sit one on his right side, and one at his left side. And he answered and said, Woman, thou wottest not what thou asketh; then he said to them, May ye drink of the cup that I shall drink? and they said, Yea, Lord. And he said, Ye shall drink of my cup, but to sit on my right hand or left hand it is not mine to give, but to the Father it is proper. But in that he said, Ye shall drink of my cup, he promised them to suffer tribulation of this world as he did, by the which they should enter into life everlasting, and to be both

on his right hand. And thus ye may see that Christ spake not of the material cup, neither of himself, nor of his apostles, neither of material bread, neither of material wine. Therefore let every man wisely, with meek prayers, and great study, and also charity, read the words of God and holy scriptures; but many of you are like the mother of Zebedee's sons to whom Christ said, Thou knowest not what thou askest. So, many of you know not what ye ask, nor what you do; for if ye did, ye would not blaspheme God as ye do, to set an alien god instead of the living God. Also Christ saith, John xv. I am a very* vine; wherefore then worship ye not the vine for God, as ye do the bread? Wherein was Christ a very vine, or wherein was the bread Christ's body, in figurative speech, which is hidden to the understanding of sinners? Then if Christ became not a material, or an earthly vine, neither did a material vine become the body of Christ. So neither the bread, material bread, was changed from its substance to the flesh and blood of Christ.

Have ye not read in John the second, when Christ came into the temple, they asked of him what token he would show, that they might believe him. And he answered them, Cast down this temple, and in three days I shall raise it again; which words were fulfilled in his rising again from death; but when he said, Undo this temple, in that that he said this, they were in error, for they understood it fleshly, and had supposed that he had spoken of the temple of Jerusalem, because he stood in it. And thereof they accused him at his passion full falsely, Matt. xxvi. For he spake of the temple of his blessed body, which rose again in the third day. And right so Christ spake of his holy body when he said, This is my body which shall be given for you, Luke xxii. which was given to death, and to rising again to bliss, for all that shall be saved by him. But like as they accused him falsely of the temple of Jerusalem, so now-a-days they accuse falsely against Christ, and say that Christ spake of the bread that he brake amongst his apostles; for in that Christ said this, they are deceived, take it fleshly, and turn it to the material bread, as the Jews did to the temple; and on this false understanding they make abomination of discomfort, as is said by Daniel the prophet, and in Matthew xxiv. to be standing in the holy place; he that readeth let him understand.

* True.

Now therefore pray we heartily to God, that this evil time may be made short for the chosen men, as he hath promised in his blessed gospel, Matt. xxiv. And the large and broad way that leadeth to perdition may be stopped, and the strait and narrow way that leadeth to bliss may be made open by holy scriptures, that we may know which is the will of God, to serve him in truth and holiness in the dread of God, that we may find by him a way of bliss everlasting. So be it.

Note on the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

As Wickliff lived before the council of Trent, it may be desirable to state the doctrine of transubstantiation as set forth by the church of Rome in his days. This may best be done by inserting the decree of the fourth council of Lateran, A. D. 1215, wherein that doctrine was commanded to be believed as an article of faith. It is as follows:— "There is one universal (catholic) church of the faithful, out of which no one whatever can be saved. In which Christ Jesus himself is the priest and the sacrifice, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar, under the forms of bread and wine; the bread being *transubstantiated* into the body, and the wine into the blood, by the divine power, so that for the accomplishing the mystery of unity, we may receive of his nature that which he received of ours." The term "transubstantiation" was then first introduced.

This change or transubstantiation was declared to take place when the priest pronounces "the words of consecration," Hoc est enim corpus meum, or, For this is my body. Then the whole *substance* of bread is supposed to depart, and the whole *substance* of Christ (or, according to the council of Trent, "the true body and the true blood, with his soul and divine nature,") takes its place, while the *form* and *appearance* (or *accidents*, as they are termed) of bread still remain! The absurdity of this doctrine was carried still farther shortly after, and it was, and is still asserted by the church of Rome, that the body and blood, soul and divinity of our Lord, "the entire Christ," exist equally under each species, (the bread and the wine,) and in each particle of each species. And that the articles thus consecrated, are to be worshipped "with the same adoration that is paid to the Deity."

This doctrine necessarily implies a rejection of the *one* sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, Heb. ix. it maintains that a continual repetition of this sacrifice is necessary for the salvation of the faithful, which sacrifice cannot be offered without the intervention of an order of men, who are consecrated to the priesthood by the pope or his immediate instruments, who are allowed to require payment for making this sacrifice, and who, by having the power of thus making Christ vested in them, become an order of beings superior to mankind, and therefore are themselves actually to be considered as objects of worship!

Without entering into argument to show that the doctrine of transubstantiation is opposed to reason, to scripture, and to the history of the primitive church, we may observe that the brief notice just given, shows that it is an IDOLATROUS doctrine. As such it was viewed by every reformer from WICKLIFF to JEWELL, and from their writings it will abundantly be seen, that in the discussion of this question in reality ALL the scriptural doctrines of salvation were involved.

Wickliff was one of the first who opposed this error; with scholars he treated it as a scholastic question, and refuted them on their own grounds; the unlearned he supplied with plain arguments, as in the preceding treatise, showing that this tenet was opposed both to the words of scripture, and to common sense. The papists, on the other hand, were fully aware of the importance of this novel doctrine to the false and usurped authority of their church. They endeavoured to prevent the progress of the truth by every means in their power. To *convince* the unlearned they had recourse to barefaced impostures, as appears from the following story, in which one instance is thus recorded by Knighton, their own annalist of that period.

John Kilingham, or Cunningham, was provincial of the Carmelite friars in England and Ireland. He was a warm opponent of Wickliff, and preached at the church of the preaching friars in 1382, at the close of the procession which archbishop Courtney ordered to be made after the condemnation of the Reformer's conclusions. At this sermon was present a knight named Cornelius Cloune, who was said to be a great favourer of Wickliff's opinions respecting the sacrament of the altar, that it remained true material bread.

The next day, the knight went to the same church to hear mass, which was celebrated by one of the friars. When the friar broke the host, or consecrated wafer, into three parts as usual, the knight saw in the hands of the friar, real flesh, raw and bloody, divided into three parts. The knight, full of wonder and amazement, as well he might be, called his squire, that he might see it also, *but he saw nothing more than usual.* But the knight, in the third piece, which ought likewise to be put into the chalice, in the middle of it saw this name, IHESUS, written in letters of flesh, all raw and bloody, which, as the writer properly observes, was very wonderful to behold! The next day was the festival of the Holy Trinity, when the friar preached at Paul's cross, and told this story to all the people. After the sermon was done, the knight attested the truth of it, promising that he would fight and die in that cause, for that in the sacrament of the altar there was the very body of Christ, and not bread only, as he himself had before believed.

Upon such a figment it is unnecessary to make any comment, or to try the miracle by the rules deduced from scripture. The Romish legends contain many other stories somewhat similar, of nuns beholding the wafer changed into the appearance of infants, the wafers bleeding when stabbed by jews and infidels, of adoration paid to them by bees, asses, dogs, and other animals, &c. &c.

TWELVE LETTINGS* OF PRAYER.

(*From a MS. in the British Museum.*)

Here follow twelve lettings* of prayer, whereby men may know better why men are not heard in their prayer of God, alway, when they pray.

THE TWELVE LETTINGS OF PRAYER.

The first letting of prayer, is the sin of him that prayeth. In Isaiah i. God saith thus, When ye make many prayers I shall not hear, for your hands are full of blood. That is, your works are full of sin. And in Isaiah lix. Your wickednesses have made departing betwixt you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you, that he should not hear. And in Jeremiah v. Our sins have forbode† God from us. And in Lamentations iii. We have done wickedly, and have deserved vengeance; therefore thou mayest not be prayed, that is, pleased by our prayer. And oft thou hast set a cloud against thee, that a prayer pass not. And in John ix. the blind man saith thus, We know that God heareth not sinners; that is, who travail not to amend them. And David saith in the Psalter, If I beheld wickedness in my heart, that is to say, If I loved wickedness, God shall not hear. And St. Gregory saith, When he that displeaseth is sent for to pray, the soul of him that is wroth, is sore stirred to worse things, that is, to more vengeance.

The second letting is, the doubt of him that prayeth. In James i. it is said, Let a man ask in faith, nothing doubting, for he that doubteth is like to the wave of the sea which is driven of the wind, and borne about. Let that man guess not that he shall get any thing of the Lord. And Bernard saith, He is proved unworthy to have heavenly blessings, that asketh of God with doubtful desire.

The third letting is this, that a man asketh not that which ought to be asked. For why? That which is asked is vile, or it is not speedful‡ to him that asketh. In John xvi.

* Hinderances. † Forbidden, separated. ‡ Serviceable, useful.

Christ saith to his disciples, Till now ye asked not any thing in my name. In Matthew xx. it is said, Ye know not what ye ask. Oft the church is not heard, when it asketh that tribulations be put away. In Isaiah xxvi. God saith thus, Have we mercy of the unpiteous man, and he shall not learn to do rightfulness. This is said in scorn; as if God said to his angels, Suffer we the unpiteous man have lust in this life, and to perish in evil death; for he will not learn to do rightfulness, but grudgeth and blasphemeth God. Also in James iv. it is said, Ye ask and take not, for ye ask evil. Isidore saith, Many that pray, are not heard at their will, for God purveyeth better things for them than they ask. As it is wont to fall to little children, who in schools pray God that they be not beaten; but the effect of their prayer is not given unto them.

The fourth letting is, unworthiness of him for whom we pray. For God, in Jeremiah vii. xi. saith, Pray not thou for this people, and take thou not praising; that is, sacrifice of praising and prayer for them; neither against and thou me, for I shall not hear thee. And in Jeremiah xv. God saith thus, Though Moses and Samuel stand before me, my will is not to this people; cast them out from my face and go they out.

The fifth letting is, the multitude of evil thoughts. In Genesis xv., Abraham drove away the birds; that is, he that prayeth shall drive away evil thoughts.

The sixth letting is, despising of God's law. In Proverbs xxviii. God saith, The prayer of him that boweth away his ear, that he hear not the law of God, shall be abominable, or cursed. And in Proverbs i. They shall call me to help, saith God, and I shall not hear them; for they hated teaching and chastising.

The seventh letting is, hardness of soul; and this is on two manners. Some is hardness against poor men, of which it is said in Proverbs xxi. If a man stoppeth his ear at the cry of a poor man, he shall cry and he shall not be heard. Another hardness is to them that have trespassed, when a man will not forgive to them. In Mark xi. Christ saith, When ye stand to pray, forgive ye, if ye have any thing against any man; that also your Father which is in heaven, forgive to you your sins. That if ye forgive not to men, neither shall your Father forgive to you your sins. And the same sentence is told in Matthew vi.

The eighth letting is, increasing of sin. David saith to

God, They that draw themselves far from thee, shall perish. In James iv. he saith, Nigh ye to God, and he shall nigh to you. He nigheth to God, that ceaseth of evil work. Of this letting, and of that which goeth before, Isidore touches, and saith thus, "In two manners a prayer is letted, that a man may not get the things that are asked; one is, if a man do yet evils, that is, wilfully continueth in sin; and the other is, if he forgive not sin to man that trespasseth to him."

The ninth letting is, suggestions of the devil; that withdraw many men from prayer.

The tenth letting is, littleness of desire. Augustine saith, "God keepeth that thing from thee, which he will not give soon to thee, that thou learn to desire great things." Gregory saith, in his Moralis, "If we by mouth ask everlasting life, and desire not in heart, we that cry are still and dumb." David saith, I was still the while I cried all day.

The eleventh letting is, the impatience of him that asketh. In 1 Sam. xxviii. Saul asked counsel of the Lord, and he answered not Saul. And Saul said, Seek ye to me a woman that hath an unclean spirit.

The twelfth letting is, the default of perseverance in prayer. In Luke xi. Christ saith, If a man continueth knocking at the gate, the friend, that is, God, shall rise and give him as many loaves as he needeth. Augustine saith, "If prayer is not removed, be thou secure that mercy is not removed." But here take heed that prayer stand most in good living; that the prayer with mouth accord with the deed, and so continue, and thou shalt take. Therefore Christ saith, in Luke xviii. It behoveth to pray ever and cease not. Augustine saith, "As long as thou hast holy desire, and livest after God's law in charity, thou prayest ever well. And if thou livest in gluttony, or in other great sins, how many prayings soever thy tongue soundeth, thy life blasphemeth, that is scorneth and despiseth God.

Now hast thou here twelve lettings of prayer, well grounded in holy scripture; by which it is good before thy prayer to search thy conscience, that thy prayer be not hindered by any of these, and so by grace to have the effect of thy prayer, and after to come to bliss without end.

ANTICHRIST'S LABOUR TO DESTROY HOLY WRIT.

From the MS. in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

HOW ANTICHRIST AND HIS CLERKS LABOUR TO DESTROY HOLY WRIT, AND TO MAKE CHRISTIAN MEN UNSTABLE IN THE FAITH, AND TO SET THEIR GROUND IN DEVILS OF HELL.

I. As our Lord Jesus Christ ordained by the writing of the four evangelists, to make his gospel surely known, and maintained against heretics, and men out of the faith; so the devil, even Satan, devises by antichrist and his worldly false clerks, to destroy holy writ and christian men's belief, by four accursed ways, or false reasons. 1. The church is of more authority, and more to be believed than any gospel. 2. That Augustine said he would not believe the gospel if the church had not taught him so. 3. That no man alive knows which is the gospel, but by the approving of the church. 4. If men say that they believe this is the gospel of Matthew or John, they ask, Why believest thou that this is the gospel? as though they would say, There is no cause but that the church confirmeth and teacheth it.

These four evidences, and many more, the fiend makes, to blind men in their belief, that they should not know what is sin, or what is virtue; which is truth, which is falsehood; which is good, which is evil; which are God's commands, and which are the fiend's lies; thus to bring all men blindly to hell and their new religion. And principally friars preach these evidences, and sow them among ignorant men in the country, to stop poor priests and ignorant men, that they be not hardy to speak of the gospel, holy writ, God's commandments, joys of heaven, of sins, and of the pains of hell, lest they stir men to rise out of their sins for dread of pains, and to live in virtuous life, to have the bliss of heaven. And this error in belief is made and committed by these accursed pharisees to magnify their new feigned

orders, founded by sinful men, not with Christ's holy religion, but more than it or any point of holy writ,* and therefore they will not be convinced of their pride and hypocrisy, and forsake their covetousness and lusts, and their own will. Therefore they will rather run to hell, and draw all men after them, advisedly, by destroying of christian faith, than come to Christ's holy religion with freedom of the gospel, which is ordained of God, of endless wisdom, without error of any sinful man. For then they must acknowledge their falseness and hypocrisy, by which they deceive christian men, from the beginning of their novelties to this time. But Lucifer's pride, and the coveting of worldly muck, and of high estates of worldly worship, cannot suffer this meekness, as men dread full sorely through the old envy of Satan, and firm rooting in sin.

II. Let us now see this bringing in the first accursed ground, that the church is of more authority and credence than the gospel. They say that Nicodemus and many more, wrote the gospels of Christ's life and his teaching, but the church put them away, and approved the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—then the church might as well have put out the four, and approved the other gospels ;† since it was in full power of the church to reprove and condemn which they would, and to approve, and to accept, which they liked, and therefore men, say they, should believe the church more than any gospel.

First, These crafty heretics understand by the church, the pope of Rome and his cardinals, and the multitude of worldly clerks assenting to his simony, and worldly lordship, above all kings and emperors of this world. For else it were not to their purpose to magnify the church as they now do. True men say that the clergy who first were wise, and holy of life, were stirred up by the Holy Ghost, to take these four gospels, and they charge not christian people with more, since these are enough and profitable at the full,

* Thus Chaucer describes,

—— Instead of preaching and of prayers,
Men may give pence to poor friars.

† Respecting the fabulous narratives here referred to, called The Gospel of Nicodemus, Of the infancy of Christ, and other similar legends, it is sufficient to remark that their contents fully prove their want of authenticity. This is apparent to the most cursory reader, yet modern infidels have urged the very same argument as the popish opponents of Wickliff! See Jones on the Sacred Canon, and Horne on the Scriptures, for an account of the apocryphal evangelists.

and are figured in many prophecies of God's law. And these four witnesses were accepted of the Holy Ghost, to write these things for man's instruction, which we may not stay to tell now. But certainly the church might not have put away the gospels, and have accepted the others; for then it had done against the will of God, and against the truth of Jesus Christ, and against charity of the Holy Ghost, to put away these witnesses that knew more of God's purity, and were holier of life, and to take witnesses not so skilled in God's will, nor so holy of life, nor so meek, nor so stable in faith and love of Jesus Christ.

But these subtle heretics travail night and day, to the example of the multitude of worldly clerks, who are full of simony, pride, covetousness, gluttony, lechery, and other sins, above Jesus Christ and his gospel, to have their worldly life, pride, and lusts maintained; that no man should hinder them in their worldly glory, nor deprive them of their lusts, though they lie against God, and slander his people. For they would make their life and teachings to be the gospel and belief of christian men; but where are greater traitors to God and his law, and more perilous and false prophets to christian people? For God commandeth, on pain of his great curse and deep condemnation, that no man withdraw any point of truth from his law, nor add thereto any novelty that is not approved of the Trinity. And Jesus Christ saith, that his gospel is an everlasting testament; but they will undo it with the vile breath of antichrist's mouth. How dare christian men maintain such heretics against God's teaching, and the peace of christian people? Such wayward heretics are unable to rule prelates, lords, and commons, in confession, preaching, and praying, and other points of their souls' health. For they deceive them in faith and good life, to have their own pride and covetousness and lusts borne up, and so draw all men to hell, that are ruled by such false confessors.

III. See now the second wheel in this devil's wain.* They bear upon Augustine that he saith thus; That he would not believe the gospel unless the church said it. True men being answered thus, suppose that Augustine said this word. But he said to this intent, That unless Christ, heard of holy church and saints in heaven, and the apostles of

* Waggon, the cars or chariots, and waggons were then of very rude construction, and much alike.

Christ that are holy church, said and approved this gospel, he would not believe thereto. And this understanding is full true, and reasonable, and according to the words of Augustine; but they understand them, that unless the multitude of accursed worldly clerks approve this for the gospel, Augustine would not believe the gospel of Jesus Christ; and since Augustine was and is, so great a doctor of holy church, no man should believe the gospel, unless the church of these prelates confirm that this is the gospel of Christ; and unless the multitude of antichrist's clerks approve the gospel or truth of holy writ, no man should hold the gospel, or any command of God, or maintain any truth against antichrist, and his worldly prelates. But what heresy might sooner destroy christian man's belief? and God forbid that Augustine were in perilous heresy, or any christian man, therefore it is leasing* to slander St. Augustine with this accursed error, to colour their own false understanding and heresy by this holy doctor.

For by this accursed wheel, antichrist's clerks condemn christian men's faith, the commands of God, and points of charity, and bring in their own crooked laws, to hold up their pride and covetousness, and to curse men for doing works of charity. Men must upon pain of damnation receive their wicked deeds as belief, and forsake the gospel of Christ, and take fiends' leasings instead of God's lore! And more cursedness to destroy christian men's faith, than will ensue from this understanding, no man or fiend can imagine till the day of doom. Therefore, christians should stand to the death for maintaining Christ's gospel and true understanding thereof, gotten by holy life and great study, and not set their faith or trust in sinful prelates and their clerks, nor in their understanding of holy writ. For with their worldly life, full of pride, covetousness, gluttony, idleness, and hawking and hunting, and playing at the chess, and tables; riot and dancing, feast making, drunkenness and lechery, they are unable to perceive the truth of holy writ, and high pureness of God. For Christ saith in the gospel, that the Father of heaven hideth these truths from worldly wise men, and queint†, and showeth them to meek men, as were Christ's disciples. And the wise man saith, that wisdom shall not enter into an evil-willed man, for the fear of God is the beginning and plenty of wisdom. If they have not this fear, then they have not this wisdom; therefore, it is Lucifer's

* Falsehood, lies. † Conceited.

pride, and surpasses it, to constrain men to take understanding of holy writ, according to the knowledge and wisdom of such worldly clerks, who are enemies of Christ, and his law and his servants. For they are blind in God's law and good life, and lead blind men to hell, as Christ saith in the gospel. For instead of keys of heaven, that is, knowledge of holy writ, and power to destroy sin, and to save christian souls by true teaching and good example, they have ignorance of God's law, and no will to study and live thereafter; but skill and practice in their own wicked laws, for pride and covetousness, and feign power of tyranny to stop true men from preaching the gospel, and to curse them if they preach against their will, and pursue them, and burn them, and certainly these are the keys of hell.

IV. See now the third wheel of Satan's car; these deceitful clerks and religious of Lucifer say, that no man knows which is the gospel, but by the approving and confirming of the church; but true men say that to their understanding this is full of falsehood. For christian men are certain of belief by the gracious gift of Jesus Christ, and that this truth, taught by Christ and his apostles, is the gospel, though all antichrist's clerks cry ever so fast the contrary, upon pain of curse, imprisonment, and burning. And this belief is not grounded on the pope and his cardinals, for then it must fail and be undone, as they fail and some time are destroyed; but it is grounded on Jesus Christ, God and man, and on the Holy Trinity. So it may never fail but in default of him that should love God and serve him, and faileth on these two points. For almighty God, and his truths, are the foundation of christian men's faith. And as Paul saith, other foundation may no man set besides that which is set, that is, Jesus Christ. Therefore, though antichrist and all his worldly clerks are buried deep in hell, for their simony, pride, and covetousness, and other sins, yet christian faith faileth not, for they are not grounded thereof. But Jesus Christ is the ground thereof, for he is our God and our best Master, ever ready to teach true men all things that are profitable, and needful to their souls, and this teaching may not fail, but for inability of him that should receive this teaching.

V. The fourth wheel of Belial's cart is this; when christian men say they know by belief that this is Christ's gospel,

these malicious heretics ask, Why they believe that this is gospel? But true men ask of them again, Why they believe that God is God? And if they tell a good sufficient cause, we tell the same cause why we believe that this is Christ's gospel. But these heretics would have this cause to be, that it is for that their prelates teach that theirs is Christ's gospel; and they would have all their false purposes as of this cause; that whatever the prelates teach openly, and maintain stedfastly, were of as great authority or more than Christ's gospel. And so they would destroy holy writ and christian faith, and maintain that whatever they do were no sin! But christian men take their faith of God, by his gracious gift, when he giveth it to them; knowing and understanding truths needful to save men's souls, by grace to assent in their hearts to such truths. This men call faith, and of this faith christian men are more certain than any man is of worldly things, by any bodily knowledge.

Therefore, Christ reproved most the default of belief, both in the Jews, and in his disciples; and therefore, Christ's apostles prayed most to have stableness in faith, for it is impossible that any man please God without faith; and so Christ prayed principally that the faith of Peter and other disciples should not fail. And God's law tells how by faith saints wrought all their great wonders and marvels that they did; and if antichrist say here, that each man may feign that he hath right faith, and good understanding of holy writ given of God, when he is in error, let a man seek in all things truly the honour of God, and live justly to God and man, and God will not fail to him in any thing that is needful to him, neither in faith, nor understanding, nor in answer against his enemies. And as faith is the shield of christian men against all temptations of the fiend, and the ground of all virtues, therefore Satan ordained these new sects to be so many, and to have a name of wisdom and holiness before all others; and he grounded them in pride, envy, covetousness, gluttony, lechery, and hypocrisy, to walk among the people, and to stir them by word and example to be unstable in this faith; and he stirreth high worldly prelates to be favourable to them, and to maintain them in this hypocrisy, to colour their own sin thereby, and to hinder true men to preach plainly and freely Christ's gospel and the commands of God, for saving of man's soul.

Hereby, and by many more deceits, christian men should know how the new religionists are false prophets, and

accursed sects, of which Christ and his apostles prophesied before, and taught men to know them by their works, which are hypocrisy, covetousness, and maintaining of sin, by false preaching, flattering, false counselling, and slandering of true men; and making men secure of spiritual help by false letters of fraternity,* and many other novelties brought up by hypocrisy and covetousness.

And as John the evangelist commandeth, christian men should not receive them into their houses, nor salute them, and Paul biddeth that men should not commune with them, that they be confounded and shamed of their false heresy, and turn to Christ's holy religion, without error of sinful men's traditions. And may God almighty strengthen his little flock against these four wheels of Satan's car, against antichrist's clerks and helpers, and make them strong in rightful faith, hope, and charity, to seek truly the worship of Jesus Christ, and the saving of men's souls, to despise antichrist's boast and feigned power, and willingly and joyfully to suffer pain and reproof in the world, for the name of Jesus and his gospel, to give firm example to others, to follow and attain the high bliss of heaven by glorious martyrdom as other saints did before. May Jesus of his endless might, endless wisdom, endless goodness, and charity, grant to us sinful wretches this boon. Amen.†

* See note, p. 134. These letters of fraternity were written on parchment, and very beautifully ornamented.

† Dr. James, in his Apology for Wickliff, states his opinions relative to Holy Scripture at considerable length. He says, that Wickliff, in his book, De veritate scripturæ, affirms positively that God's will is plainly revealed in the two testaments. That a christian man well understanding Christ's law, may thence gather sufficient knowledge during his pilgrimage here upon earth. That we ought to admit of no science or law, which is not subordinate to this law, or helpful to bring us to this law. That if the pope should attempt to dispense with holy scripture, as some feign that he may, he should no longer be accounted a christian. And this was not a bare opinion which might grow upon dislike, discontent, or be uttered by way of contradiction, but a settled and constant persuasion out of the word of God. Dr. James adds, that he could enlarge this point with infinite quotations, so earnest is Wickliff every where in his writings to establish this doctrine which is the ground of all our protestant opinions. And that Wickliff was thus earnest on account of the ignorance of those times, when the few sermons preached were absurdities and falsehoods, God's law and gospel being laid aside.

WICKLIFF'S TRIALOGUS.*

EXTRACT FROM BOOK III. CHAPTER XXV.

ON THE INCARNATION AND DEATH OF CHRIST.

"*Aletheia.* I PERCEIVE, brother Phronesis, that connected with these doctrines are many other things which require explanation. I might instance the inquiry whether it was absolutely necessary that Christ should be made flesh, that his sacrifice might be a satisfaction for the sins of men. And whether afterwards it was also necessary that he himself should die. Again, Why is not the sin of the devil done away, as well as that of man?—

Phronesis. I am glad, sister, that these questions are so accurately stated. Many remarks may be made upon the first proposition. In the first place, the history of the fall of Adam intimates that he sinned through ignorance, since the woman was beguiled, and the man deceived and stupified by the sin. In the next place, we are led to suppose that both the man and the woman, considering the dreadful severity of their punishment, repented profitably unto salvation, before the change of death. And, in the third place, we conclude that the righteousness of God must be preserved inviolate, notwithstanding the transgression of the first man, as has been frequently declared before. These positions being granted, it is argued from thence, that it was necessary the WORD of the Lord should be made flesh, because it was necessary that the human race should be saved in their first progenitor, according to the second supposition (that Adam and Eve repented). And this salvation was impossible unless Christ was made flesh, which must therefore certainly take place. For it behoved that man should be saved, since he repented so profitably, and God could not refuse his mercy to any one who so repented. And

* For an account of the Trialogus, see the life of Wickliff. This extract has been translated for the present work as a specimen was considered necessary for the reasons stated, p. 156. In many places the original is very obscure, and the latinity very barbarous, which, with the logical terms frequently introduced, make a literal rendering impracticable. Some of the arguments brought forward in this chapter will be found in the Postills, expressed in more simple terms.

as, according to the third proposition, it behoved that satisfaction should be made for sin, so it behoved that the same nature of man should make a satisfaction, equal to the guilt which that nature had incurred in the first formed man. This no one could possibly do, unless he united in himself the nature of God and man. For other men cannot, of themselves, even make satisfaction individually for their own sins; how then shall any of them make satisfaction for the whole race of mankind? And who, I ask, could be humbled so low, that his humility could compensate the pride with which Adam exalted himself? For since Adam so exalted himself, as to imply that he had attained an equality with the Deity, inasmuch as he consented to the temptation that he needed not to obey the divine command, it is plain that it behoved the person who would make satisfaction, to descend from as high a degree of exaltation as would be equivalent to the proud elevating of himself which Adam had attempted.

But how was this to be obtained, unless that, as a man who was *not* God had presumed to arrogate to himself equality with God, so a man who *was* God should descend from his equality with God to the low estate of man. Therefore, the apostle in the second chapter to the Philippians, says, that Christ emptied himself. I must however remark to you, that the presumption of the first man, by the nature of his crime, was false; but the assumption of man's nature, and the humiliation of the second man, was real and true. And it is also to be remarked, that this second man did not lose the form of the Godhead, which indeed was not possible. For Deity could not possibly become a mere accident (or part) of any one. But still retaining his proper Godhead, Christ assumed the human nature; which human nature, although it was in itself a substance, yet still it was extraneous to the Deity.*

And if any one captiously should inquire, Why should the second, or middle person of the blessed Trinity, be incarnate rather than the first or third; my answer is, That as the offence was committed through ignorance, therefore it must be done away by wisdom embodied in the person who undertook the redemption—which wisdom is no other than the WORD of God.

* That is, the human and divine nature were entirely distinct substances. Not that one was a substance, and the other but an accident, or appearance.

Therefore, since it behoves that one person in the Godhead should send another person to make satisfaction for sin, and as it is plain that the Father could not be sent, since he was the first Person of the Trinity, the Originator; it evidently was necessary, that he should send another to be made incarnate for sin, which, for very many reasons, it was most fitting should be the Word of God. And even if he had not been thus fitting, yet it is plain that the Saviour should be chosen according to this arrangement, since in the economy of the Godhead it could not have been planned in any other way.

It is also equally plain, that since the sin of man must be done away by a Mediator who could render due satisfaction, it behoved Christ to be made flesh, and it was necessary that his death should follow, that his suffering might bear a proportion to the immense presumption of Adam, else satisfaction could not be made for the crime committed. Therefore, as Adam indulged pride so as to bring death upon himself voluntarily; so it behoved that the second Adam should be humbled unto the death of his body, which death was voluntarily accepted and undergone by him. And therefore the apostle says, that Christ was made obedient even unto death for us; and it was requisite that his death should be accepted on the tree, that like as man was ruined by the forbidden fruit of a tree, so he should be saved by death suffered as the fruit of a tree. And there are in every part of these transactions, other coincidences which might be stated.

And indeed a clear answer may be given to the second difficulty you have proposed, from these very reasons. The question was, Why is not the sin of the devil remitted?—Now, as it is absolutely necessary to the performance of the actions of beings, that there must be agents, and there must be suitable recipiency of nature in those who are acted upon, so in order to put away sin, there must be a competent power of action in the agent, and some suitable disposition of contrition in the sinner; but as this is altogether wanting in the devils, so their sin cannot be done away. Nor can there be a doubt but had they been profitably contrite, God could not have refused to grant them the remission of their sins. So that all the fault must attach to the devil himself, being impenitent.* For indeed the sin of the devil is

* The original is very obscure, but the sense appears to be, That God is not to be blamed for not forgiving the wicked spirits, which he would have done, had they repented. But as they did not, and would

the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is called the sin of final impenitence. Therefore, as Adam sinned against the WISDOM of God the Father, and on that account it was necessary this Wisdom should become incarnate, so in order to accomplish the salvation of devils, it would have been requisite that the third Person of the Trinity should have been incarnate. And as this was impossible, so was the salvation of the devil. Nevertheless his punishment is not in itself so severe, but that while his pride and presumption remain the same, he is less pained by the infliction of the punishment, than by the anguish of his feelings, since he does not possess a human bodily nature. Therefore, since an act cannot take place where equal powers are in opposition, and still less from the smaller power, when they are unequal, it appears that the punishment of the devil cannot expel his obstinate pride. He is therefore hardened for ever. And as he can derive no advantage from the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, because He took not on him his nature, it is evident that unless the Holy Spirit should become incarnate, (which is impossible,) the devil cannot be saved. Hence some have refined upon this doctrine,* asserting that as the devil sinned against clear knowledge, and from mere wickedness of intention, so no one will be damned by sin properly against the Holy Ghost, unless a little before his death, having attained to clear and full knowledge, he should, of his own pure malice, sin to desperation, and so in a certain sense, become a devil.

Wickliff then proceeds to solve other difficulties; but he treats them altogether in such an unprofitable scholastic form, that it is not desirable to weary the reader any farther with the discussion. Objections which proceed from scholastic divinity, may well be left to that system to solve. The preceding extract is presented to the reader to give some idea of the hinderances to the reformation, by the prejudices that arose from the training to which the human mind was subjected in the dark ages. A comparison of the Trialogus with the more simple tracts of Wickliff, written by him in English, for the common people, shows the great difficulties interposed in the way of the learned of that period—it may

not repent, it is entirely their own fault, and they have only to blame themselves that they are excluded from mercy. Such questions, it is evident, are at best unprofitable, but the scholastic divinity abounded with them. This one specimen will be sufficient to satisfy the reader.

* The serious reader will probably consider the whole to be unnecessary refinement.

truly be said, that "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." We also see more clearly the striking interference of divine power, in leading Wickliff to lay aside the vain janglings then so popular, and to set forth gospel truth in simplicity. There is, however, a deep and heartfelt seriousness manifest in many parts of the Trialogus. Concern for the salvation of souls actuated Wickliff amidst all the mazes of scholastic divinity, and not the mere love of argument and victory evinced by the frivolous, blasphemous, and even indecent discussions of Aquinas and his followers.* Wickliff deeply felt the awful situation of his country, to which he doubtless applied the words spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, (v. 30, 31.) "A wonderful and a horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" In all his writings he desired to impress upon the minds of his readers the solemn personal inquiry, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Vaughan, in his remarks upon the Trialogus, says, "The third book relates more immediately to moral and theological opinions. The power to act virtuously and devoutly, wherever possessed, is said to be derived from the grace of God; and hence it is inferred, that no excellence of mind or conduct can be justly regarded as meriting eternal life. Faith is defined as an assent of the reason, referring exclusively to the truth, and to things unseen; as forming the basis of all christian enjoyment; and as that principle, the declension of which must necessarily precede each gradation in apostasy. The love of God is beautifully inculcated as the only secure foundation of morals and of social happiness.—The portions of this book which relate to the evil of sin; to the Saviour's incarnation and sacrifice, as necessary to procure its remission; to the excellences of the Redeemer's character; and to the doctrines of grace, are only distinguished from passages in his other writings referring to the same matters, as being more strongly marked by the scholastic method of treating them; a peculiarity which cannot add to their attraction with a modern reader."

* Two specimens from the Quodlibets of Thomas Aquinas will suffice—Utrum angelus transeat ab extremo ad extremum per medium? Utrum hæc sit falsa, Deus potest peccare si vult? These are taken almost without selection from the above work of "the angelical doctor," who at one time was idolized by the whole western world.

Wickliff's Opinions of the Papacy.

From Dr. James's Apology or Defence of Wickliff.

This controversy about the supremacy or primacy of the pope, being the very soul and life of popery, may be resolved into sundry questions: 1. Whether the pope be supreme judge upon earth, in all causes and over all persons? 2. Admit he were so, whether he may intermeddle with the affairs of kings and princes? 3. Supposing that also, whether he be of that temper and making that he cannot err in his final conclusions? 4. And lastly, whether he be antichrist or no?

I. Wickliff, supposing the donation of Constantine (which afterwards was proved a counterfeit), for a while held that the pope was to be consulted in the greatest points of religion; that he had "a plenary and full power of himself;" and that "he did incur the crime of paganism," who did not obey his mandates. But what of all this? Was Wickliff a papist? No, verily. For, first, this plenary power was built upon a rotten foundation, which afterwards fell to the ground of itself. 2. It was given to the pope only "for to edify, not to destroy or demolish the church." 3. It was so limited, that he could do nothing "against the law of God, or against the law of reason." Lastly, if his laws did "go contrary to Christ's laws," an "inferior might, and in conscience ought, not only to disobey him, but to reprove, correct, and contradict him, as Paul did withstand Peter unto the face." Further, he grants the pope no greater authority or superiority over his brethren, "than Peter and Apollos had over their new converts," whom he excludes flatly from any such sovereignty, taking away all honour from them, and giving it to Christ Jesus, "to whom all knowledge, all love, all duty, from all christians is to be ascribed, so far that no creature is to be acknowledged, loved, or honoured, but Christ, or in respect of Christ;" neither is it possible, as he thinks, "for any catholic to be so unadvised or inconsiderate as to follow the pope's fiat, Let it be done, when He that spake, and it was done, shall say, No.—For this verse can be true of no earthly man, but of our blessed Saviour Christ Jesus; This is my will, this I command—My will for reason good shall stand."

Finally, he was "condemned as an heretic for denying the pope's supremacy," therefore he cannot well be accounted of the Romish church.

II. The pope's civil dominion or right in temporal estates,—this question Wickliff doth every where determine against the pope, for the king and his regality; and that of set purpose, in an especial treatise, Of Civil Dominion, strengthening his opinion plainly out of the fundamental laws of this land, with great judgment and knowledge.

III. That the pope may err, is showed plainly throughout all Wickliff's works, where he proves that the pope is "of that nature that he may err." "That one whom men call pope may err, not only in manner and conversation of life, but also in doctrine and articles of the Creed." "He may sin, and no man in the world easier or more grievously, and indeed they have erred, and been infected with foul heresies." Yea, he thinketh it to be "likely that all bishops of Rome for three hundred years and more, before his time, were fully heretics."

IV. Whether the pope be antichrist?—This Wickliff proves by comparing his doctrine and manners with Christ's, chiefly in his book of the Seven Deadly Sins: telling us that "forasmuch as through his decrees God's commands, by his commandments Christ's commandments, by his decretals Paul's epistles, by his canon law the canonical scripture, was villified, nullified, utterly defaced and debased," a fault for which he is bold to tax him in sundry passages of his works, he pronounces of him absolutely that he is "Potissimus antichristus, Most especially antichrist."

The quotations are from Wickliff's Writings.

WICKLIFF'S POSTILLS,

OR

SERMONS.

More than three hundred of Wickliff's discourses from the pulpit have been preserved. In many instances they are only brief notes, in others they extend to several folio pages closely written. It is very probable that they are only the heads or portions of his discourses, and most likely were taken down by some of his hearers. From the character of Purvey, his curate at Lutterworth, we may suppose that he would endeavour to preserve such memorials of the Reformer, but no certain information has come down to us respecting their first publication or preservation. One passage, however, p. 226, makes it probable that he sometimes wrote his discourses.

They are nearly all what were denominated postills, which now are called lectures or expositions, and they are founded upon the portions of scripture appointed for the public services of the Sundays and festivals. Wickliff felt the peculiar importance of this method of instruction from scripture, in preference to the plan of "declaring," or delivering what may be called essays, or orations, on some given subject. Several volumes of these sermons exist in the different public libraries where Wickliff's manuscripts are found, and also some separate copies of single discourses. The discourses, or extracts, in the following pages are from two copies in the British Museum. The phraseology has been varied from the originals as little as possible.

"There is scarcely a peculiarity of opinion adopted by Wycliffe, the nature or the progress of which might not be illustrated from these voluminous remains. It should also be stated that these compositions are strictly of a popular character. References to abstruse or speculative questions frequently arise, either from the import of the text, or from the reasonings suggested by it; but these are invariably dismissed, that 'things more profiting,' might become the matter of attention." This extract is from the second volume of Vaughan's life of Wycliffe, in which will be found a valuable account of the Reformer's preaching, with some extracts from his discourses.

WICKLIFF'S POSTILLS.

I.

ON THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST.

*Unto us a child is born, &c.** Isaiah ix.

ACCORDING to the joy that Paul telleth, we may say on Christmas day, that a child is born to us; for Jesus Christ, by our belief, is this day born. And to this intent spake God, both in figure and in letter, that a child is born to us, in whom we should have this joy. And three short words are to be spoken from Isaiah's speech, so that men may after joy in the service of this child. First, we believe, that since our first elders had sinned, there must satisfaction be made therefor, by the righteousness of God. For as God is merciful, so he is full of righteousness. But how should he judge all the world unless he kept righteousness therein? For the Lord against whom this sin was done, is God almighty, and allrightful; and no sin may be done but it is done against God. And ever the greater the lord is, against whom sin is done, ever the more is the sin to be rewarded of this lord. It were a great sin to do against the king's bidding; but the sin is more without measure, to do against God's bidding. According to our belief, God bade Adam not to eat of the apple; but he brake God's command; and he was not excused therein, neither by his own folly, (or weakness,) nor by Eve, nor by the serpent. And thus by the righteousness of God, this sin must always be punished. And it is a light word, to say that God might of his power forgive this sin without the satisfaction that was made for this trespass. For God might do this if he would; but his justice will not suffer but that each trespass be punished, either in earth or in hell. And God may not accept a person to forgive his sin without satisfaction; else he must give free leave to men and to angels for to sin. And then sin were no sin, and our God were no God. And this is the first lesson that we take from our faith.

* In the original a few words of each passage of scripture are prefixed to the sermons in Latin. They are printed here according to the present authorized English version.

The second teaching that we take is, that he who should make satisfaction for the sin of our first father, must needs be God and man. For as mankind trespassed, so must mankind make satisfaction. And therefore it could not be that an angel should make satisfaction for man; for neither has he the might, nor was his the person (or nature) that sinned here. But since all men are one person, that person maketh satisfaction for man, if any member of this person make satisfaction for all this person. And by this may we see that if God made a man of nought, or anew, to be of the kind of Adam, yet he were holden to God, as much as he might for himself, and so he might not make satisfaction for himself, and for Adam's sin. And thus since satisfaction must be made for Adam's sin, as it is said, such a person must make this satisfaction as was both God and man; for the worthiness of this person's deeds were even with* the unworthiness of the sin.

The third teaching that needs must follow of these two, is, that a Child is born to man, to make satisfaction for man's sin. And this Child must needs be God and man given to man. And he must needs bear his empire upon his shoulder, and suffer for man. And this Child is Jesus Christ, who we suppose was born to day. And we suppose that this Child is only born to those men that follow him in manner of living, for he was born against others. Those men that are unjust and proud, and rebel against God, have their judgment in Christ, that they must needs be condemned by him; and always, if they are unkind against his Spirit, to their death.

And thus, if we truly desire that this Child be born to us, have we joy of this Child, and we follow him in three virtues; in righteousness, and meekness, and patience for our God. For whoever contemneth Christ unto his death, against the Spirit, must needs be condemned of this Child, as all others shall be saved. And thus the joy of this Child, that was thus meek and full of virtues, should make men be little in malice, and then they hold well the feast. To them that will fight and chide, I say, that this Child who is born, is Prince of peace, and loveth peace; and condemneth men contrary who are contrary to peace. Study we how Christ came in the fulness of time when he should; and how he came in meekness, as his birth teacheth us; and how he came in patience from his birth to his death;

* Or equal to, see the preceding extract from the Trialogus.

and follow we him in these three, for joy that we have of him. For this joy, in this patience, (of Christ,) bringeth to joy that shall last for ever.

II.

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S TESTIMONY OF CHRIST.

The next day John seeth Jesus coming to him, John i.

This gospel telleth how John the Baptist witnessed of Christ, both of his Godhead, and somewhat of his manhood. The history saith, that John saw Jesus coming to him, and said thus of our Lord, Lo, the Lamb of God; lo, him that doeth away the sins of the world. For he is both God and man. Christ is called God's lamb, for many reasons. In the old law they were wont to offer a lamb without blemish, which should be a year old, for the sin of the people. And thus Christ was without blemish, and was offered on the cross for the sin of all this world. Such lambs as were offered fell sometimes to the share of the priest. This Lamb that made end of the other, fell fully to God's hand. Other lambs in a manner put away the sin of one country; but this Lamb properly put away the sin of all this world. And thus he was the end and figure of the lambs of the old law. And thus showeth Baptist, by his speaking, both of the manhood of Christ and his Godhead. For only God might thus put away sin. Since all other lambs had blemishes which they might not themselves put away. And so if priests have power to release sin, as Christ's vicars, nevertheless they have this power only in as much as they accord with Christ. So that if their keys and Christ's will are discording and twain, they feign falsely to absolve, and then they neither loose nor bind. So that in each such working the Godhead of Christ must first work. And therefore saith Baptist of Christ, This is he that I said of, after me is come a man which is made before me; for he was my prior. For as Christ was a man, so God made him then the prior of all his religion; and he was abbot, as Paul saith, of the best order that may be.* And first I knew him not; I knew in soul that he was born, but I could not with bodily eyes know him from another man. And this befell commonly. But for to show him in

* Heb. v.

Israel, therefore I baptize thus in water. And John bare witness and said, that he saw the Spirit come down as a dove from heaven, and dwell on him. But God that sent me to wash in water, he taught me and said thus, On whom thou seest the Spirit come down, and dwelling upon him, that is he that baptizeth men in the Holy Ghost. And I say and bear witness that this is God's own Son.

III.

THE GOSPEL LIGHT.

Arise, shine, for thy light is come; and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, &c. Isaiah lx.

Men expound commonly this prophecy of Jesus, that Isaiah saw in spirit how Christ should be worshipped of the three kings of the east soon after that he was born; and what Matthew telleth teacheth well of this text, to what purport it was spoken of the prophet Isaiah.

First he beginneth thus, "Rise, and be thou lightened, Jerusalem, for thy light is come; and the glory of thy Lord is sprung up on thee." Here true men understand of Jerusalem, that was the head city in the land of Judea, the holy church that wandereth here on earth. For Jerusalem, in divers places, betokeneth in divers manners; now the city of that country, now the church that wandereth here, and now the church that is above. And all are figured by this city. Jerusalem also, by interpretation, betokeneth a sight of peace. But here men see afar and in bliss, true peace.

This Jerusalem should rise from sin, and be lightened with knowledge and grace; since Christ, who is the first Light, is made man for this end, and Christ who is the Father's Wisdom; and so the glory of the Lord is sprung of this kindred, and is in it, since he is Mary's son.

And thus it is a great sin not to rise and to open our windows. For this spiritual light is ready to shine to all men that will open. That man receiveth in vain the grace of God, as Paul saith, who taketh of God many gifts, both of fortune and of nature, and will not thank God thereof. He is an unkind man, upon whom the sun shineth and yet will not open his window to take light that should save him. And here men say commonly, that first man's folly is unkind, and because of this unkindness, God giveth man no more his gifts; since God approveth not that unkind

man should ever sin thus. But yet God maketh sinful man and unkind man, a good man; and all the goodness of this cometh of the goodness of God. And let us not busy us about further cause, for God is the first cause.

But the prophet saith, "For lo, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick mist shall hide the peoples." Here we may know two manner of men by these words of Isaiah. Some men are evermore dark, and want grace to come to bliss; as the earth is ever dark, and taketh not light by clearness of its own. And God's word saith that these men shall be damned. But some have mists for a time, but yet they are a people, as the men of holy church, for the time that they are in sin. And these men, by grace of God, take light that pierceth them, and disposeth them to heaven, and putteth away their sin from them. And such two manner of men were in Judea before Christ came. And thus darkness of sin covered the earth till Christ came; and thick mists covered the peoples that should be saved. But this Light that came to men pierced the mist, and made it clear: and so this Light, that was made man, cleared those men that he would save.

And of this Light speaketh this prophet, and of these men that shall be saved; "But upon thee shall the Lord spring, and upon thee his glory be seen." For of the kindred of Jacob, and in that kindred, was Christ born. And many of them were saved by Christ; and many others of heathen men. "And folk wander in thy light; and kings in springing of thy birth." For about the time of Christ's birth three kings came out of the east; and they and many others saw the light of this star. And muse we not when this star appeared first in the east; and how long time these three kings were in coming to Bethlehem; for soon after Christ was born they came, and thus worshipped Christ. For as the gospel witnesseth, they found the child with his mother; and it is likely in the same stable wherein Christ was born in Bethlehem. And so it must needs be soon after the time that Christ was born.

And afterward this prophet speaketh to the glory and joy of Christ; "Lift up all about thine eyes, and see; all these are gathered and are come to thee, to do worship as they should. And all these are figures to thee, that thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall rise from aside; and many countries shall believe in thee. Then shalt thou see and abound, and thine heart shall wonder

and be enlarged, when the multitude of the sea shall be turned to believe of thee, and the strength of heathen men shall come to thee, and believe in thee. The flowing of camels shall be unto thee; men that shall ride upon dromedaries; men of Midian, and of Ephah. All they of Saba shall come, whom God hath ordained for this journey, bringing gold and incense, and telling of hearing to God." This letter seemeth somewhat misty, and therefore men tell divers senses of it.

Some understand these words to the spiritual understanding of them. And so men doubt here oft of what country these three kings were. And it is enough here to know that they were of the east; whether they were of Arabia, or of Saba, or of other place, such knowledge is not needful for us to know now; but do we worship to this Child with gold, incense, and with myrrh. For we should know that his Godhead, as gold, is more than other metals; and his wisdom, as gold, shineth before other. We should acknowledge that Christ is the first Priest of all, and offer to him devotion, since he is both God and man. We should also acknowledge that Christ was dead, for our sake, and rose again, as he ordained. And so shall we all do at the last resurrection, either to bliss or to pain. And live we all just life; and love this Lord up to our power; and then he will reward us in bliss after these three gifts. And here many men think that men should lightly pass over this, and speak of things that are certain, which profit to men that hear them.

IV.

THE LEPER AND THE CENTURION.

And behold there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, &c.—And there came unto him a centurion beseeching him, &c. Matt. viii.

This gospel telleth of two miracles that Jesus did, and containeth much instruction about these two miracles. The history telleth how Jesus came down of the hill, when he had given his law to his disciples; and much people followed him, for the devotion that they had to his law and his words. And, lo, there came a leper man and bowed to him, and said, Lord, if thou wilt, thou mayest heal me. And Christ said he would, and bade him be whole. It is

commonly supposed that this leprous man knew that Christ was both God and man, and so that Christ might heal him, but in his own worthiness trusted he nought. And therefore he said that if Christ would, he might heal him of his leprosy. And then was Christ God; and God would that proud men and leprous heretics would well confess the faith, and then should they be whole. And Christ stretched out his hand and touched him; and said, "I will make thee whole, and able thee thereto." And thus doeth God to whom he giveth his grace. And straightway the leprosy of this man was cleansed. And this speedy healing betokens this miracle. And that Christ touched this leprous man, teaches us now that the manhood of Christ was instrument to his Godhead, for to do miracles that he would were done; and that touching of leprous men was lawful to men that thus would help them. But Christ might not be blemished with touching of this leprous man. And so taught Christ his everlasting good will, and taught us to perform the good will that we have. And afterwards Christ bade him, See that thou tell no man; but go and show thee to the priest, and offer that gift which Moses bade in witness of such health.

Men say this word may be understood on three manners. First, that this man should tell no man hereof before he had offered what Christ bade him. The second cause and the better is, that Christ bade this to teach us to flee boasting and thanks of men to whom we do good. And thus we should not tell this to obtain man's thanks. The third saith, that Christ bade this to flee slandering God's law among men, and to flee boasting of himself, and the conceiving evil of God. And as the old law was then ceased, Christ bade fulfil this law, as author thereof. And thus, when a man showeth by his holy life, active life, (as by two dove-birds,) or contemplative life, (that is, a pair of turtles;) by these signs he showeth that his sins be forgiven, and that unto priests who well understand this.* And thus sinful men should counsel with priests, and take of them medicine to flee more sin.

The second miracle teaches how Christ healed a heathen man, for love of the centurion that kept Capernaum, which was the head town of the country of Galilee. This centurion told Christ that his child† lay in his house, sick of the

* Leviticus xiv.

† Or servant. The term child was often applied generally to young persons.

palsy, and was evil tormented. But Luke telleth how this knight did this by old men of the Jews, who much praised this knight; and said that he was a friend to them, and had built them a synagogue. And Christ came with them nigh to this knight's house; and this knight said thus unto Jesus Christ, Lord, I am not worthy that thou enter under my roof, but say only with word, and my servant shall be whole. For I am a man put in this place by power of the emperor, having under me knights for to do mine office. And I say to one, Go, and he goeth; and I say to another, Come, and he cometh; and I say to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And by this the knight would mean that Christ had no need to enter into his house to heal his sick man, since Christ is God almighty, under no power. And Jesus, hearing these words, wondered, although he knew and ordained before that this knight should be thus true. And therefore Christ said to the folk that followed him, Truly I say to you, I found not so much faith in all the folk of Israel, neither priests nor commons. Christ meant not of his apostles, nor of his mother, nor of his attendants, for they were taken from Israel, as Christ was there a strange Lord. And therefore Christ telleth of his church that shall be of heathen men—that many of the east and the west shall come and rest with the patriarchs in the kingdom of heaven, where the children of this realm shall be put out, and cast into hell; there shall be weeping, that is, sensible sorrow; and gnashing of teeth, which is more, for it is pain of the loss of bliss, which passeth all sensible pain. And Jesus said to this knight, Go, thy servant shall be whole; for as thou believedst, by my grace, be it done unto thee. And the child was made whole in the same hour that Christ spake thus.

We shall know that faith is a gift of God; and so God gives it not to man, unless he gives it graciously. And thus all good things that men have are gifts of God. And thus, when God rewardeth a good work of man, he crowneth his own gift. And this is of grace; for all things are of grace, that men have of the will of God. And God's goodness is the first cause which giveth men these good things. And so it may not be that God do good to men, unless he do these good things freely by his grace. And with this we shall grant that men deserved of God, for in grace they make them worthy to have this good of God. But we shall not understand that each grace of God may not be by himself,

but grace is a manner in man, by which he is gracious to God. And other grace on God's side is good will of God; and for which grace in God, men receive grace in them. And the chiding of idiots, such as was Pelagius, and others who conceive not that a thing may be, unless it may be by itself, as substances are, is to be scorned, and to be left to fools.—But leave we this, and learn we of this knight to be meek in heart, in word, and deed; for he granted first that he was under man's power; and yet by power of man he might do many things. Much more should we know that we are under God's power, and that we may do nothing but with power of God. And if we disuse this power, wo shall be to us therefore. So this root of meekness shall get other virtues to us, and grace of God to deserve reward of heaven and good things of glory, as it was in this gentle knight.

V.

CHRIST STILLING THE TEMPEST.—ON FAITH.

And behold there arose a great tempest in the sea, &c.
Matthew viii.

This gospel teacheth a miracle that Christ did on the water. And such miracles confirm the faith of holy church full much in rude (ignorant) men, if they are heard; and so doing of miracles in water and in land, betokeneth that Christ showed his wonders to divers men. Some men received him not to the health of their soul, for they were unstable as water, and soon did away Christ's knowledge. But other men were stable as land, who held the knowledge that Christ put in them. And by the ground of such faith, they went fully the way to heaven. The story telleth of Jesus that he entered into a boat, and his disciples followed him. And, lo, the water moved fast, so that the boat was hid with the waves; for the wind and the waves were contrary unto them. Christ slept at this time, as he had ordained. The disciples came and waked him, and said thus to Christ, Lord, save us, for we perish; and Christ said to them, What dread ye, little of faith? And Christ rose up, and commanded to the winds and the water, and speedily they were rested. And all the people wondered hereof, and said among themselves, What is he, that the winds and the sea obey to him?

Since all the deeds that Christ did, teach men how they should do, this resting of Christ in the boat betokens lore to be marked. We should at times rest and pray to God in silence, and hear of him healthful lore, which we should afterwards teach the people. Thus also should teachers flee praising of the people, as Christ did. And this is a common sin among men that preach to the people, and certainly it is a great sin, since God should wholly have all the thanks. And thus the sleeping of Christ betokens his very manhood, and maketh his miracle the more. Also to pray him in time of need, and thus we dread only for default of faith in us. And Christ sleepeth not to us, but for default of faith. For the Godhead may not sleep, and yet we speak to him, Rise, why sleepest thou, Lord, and help us in this need.

Thus in two manners faileth belief in men. First, when men want belief, as these who knew not that Christ was God. For if they had known this wholly, they should have known that Christ, while sleeping, might have done this miracle, and much more. On the second manner faileth belief, when it worketh not well in deed, but is idle as in a sleeping man. And then clerks say it is in habit. And thus may no man do sin unless his belief fail, either on one manner or another. For even if he had fleshly belief how foul his sin is, and how much it harmeth him, he would not for all this world do sin, but flee it. And therefore prayed the disciples to Christ to enlarge their belief. And Christ said to Peter, Why doubtest thou, O thou of little belief? And Christ said to a man, that he should believe, for all things are possible to men that believe.

And shortly; no kind of virtue was praised more of Christ, than was right belief, for it is the ground of all other. Nor doubt we that belief may be now less, and now be more; since then parts of belief might go away and come anew, and then there were divers belief for diversity of parties. Such doubts we should send to the schools of Oxford; and we should know well, from God, that divers faiths in a man, now one, and now another, make one faith in him; yea, if the time be divers that this faith thus cometh or goeth. And may God thus increase our faith! We by sin enfeeble our faith. And Christ sleepeth oft to us, for such sleeping of our sin. For when winds of man's boast maketh us to dread worldly harms; and floods of tribulation come to us, they make us dread and cry on

Christ, for to have help for failing in our belief. For we should know that no such case might annoy us but for sin. And if it come for our sin, it is just and God's will. Why should we be thus distempered for what is needful to come? Love we God, and do we his will, and dread we no kind of thing but him; for default in our belief maketh us to dread for such things.

For these four manners of affections, dread, sorrow, hope, and joy, change a man's will after that he hath virtues; and if he be reared in sins, they change much in a man. For he dreads things of nought, and seeks joy of worldly things; and also sorrows for loss of things that were better for him to want, and for hope of things far from his health, as is welfare of this world. And all these teach that his will is not set on heavenly things, nor his belief grounded in God, for default of good love. For each man should dread more the loss of God's love by sin, than he should dread loss of any worldly things; for as faith teacheth us, loss of God's love were worse; why should we not dread this more since it brings more harm to us; and hope for more help by charity than by any man's help. And thus the prophet declares a curse on him who thus trusteth in man.

And here may men have a mirror to judge whether they love God, and whether they are in charity, according to the order that they should have. If they love God well, they should have more joy of him than of any earthly thing; and so of loss, if it come. If they lose the love of God by their sin, they should know they should have more sorrow thereof, than of loss of worldly things. And so this joy, with this loss, would make men to flee sin. Since many men, with diligence flee loss of worldly goods, and keep them, that they be not condemned in such loss by man's law; and dread not so much to lose goods of grace that are better; it is plain that charity is not established in them. And thus of goods of nature, for men dread much to lose them, as the rule of nature teaches us, and common experience; and if they come to us, we joy full much, as we know full well; but goods of grace we put behind, and that does away our charity. And if we feign falsehood in these two things, both God and our business shall be judges against us. About which travail we most? about goods of nature and of this world, or about goods of grace? Our own travail shall judge us. What priest bestirreth him more now for to follow Christ in virtues, than to get a benefice; or

to get worldly goods? And this teacheth that he joyeth more of worldly goods than of goods of grace. However we strive now, our Judge shall condemn us at last. And by this same reason hope and sorrow shall judge us; for we contrive our business more in hope of a worldly profit than we do in hope of heaven, or heavenly bliss that we should have. And thus we dread loss of worldly goods more than we do of goods of bliss; and this reverseth all our life.

VI.

CHARITY.

Though I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass, and as a tinkling cymbal, &c. 1 Cor. xiii.

Paul telleth in this chapter how men should know charity, and how men should keep charity; and this lore is full needful to each member of holy church. First, Paul telleth how needful is charity before other things; and he begins at the highest work that man hath in holy church. Paul saith, if he speak with men's tongues, and angels' tongues, and have not charity, he is but as brass sounding, and a cymbal tinkling. It is known by belief, that preaching and other speech is the highest deed of man, when it is done well. But however a man speak in divers tongues of men, either English, French, Latin, or other language, his voice is like a sound of brass, that destroyeth himself, unless he have charity by which he deserveth the bliss. For such men waste themselves and enlarge their pain. And on the same manner, if a man speak in angel's tongue, with clear voice, or flowery words, if he want charity with this, he is a tinkling cymbal; for he profits not to deserve this bliss, but wastes himself to his condemning.

Afterwards saith Paul, that if he have prophecy, and know all that is secret, and have all manner of science, and if he have belief, so much that he remove hills, and he have not charity, he is nought to holy church. These four things which are called virtues by the understanding of man, may be out of charity, and then they prove nought to bliss. Many men may know much, and live evil. A man may work wonders by the working of a fiend; and so it is nothing worth to praise men for such working. And thus

men may have belief unformed by charity, and such belief profiteth not, since the fiend hath such belief. And thus men may have prophecy, and all this knowledge in their souls, and be wicked workers with evil will of their souls. And thus saith Christ in the gospel; they will say, Lord, prophesied we not in thy name, and cast fiends out from men, and yet he knoweth them not to bliss.

The third time saith God in Paul, If he deal all his goods into meats for poor men, and give his body so that he burn, as some men do for heresy, and he have not charity with this, it profiteth him nought to bliss.

Since this work and these grounds seem to make holy men, and each man would naturally desire to be blessed, it is well to learn how men should know charity; since it is so needful to men to come to bliss of heaven. And therefore, in this second part of this epistle, Paul telleth sixteen conditions by which men may know this love. The first is, that charity is patient, and so meek that he conformeth his will meekly to God's will, and thus he gnaweth not himself to death for any thing that befalleth in the world, but for good things that befall he hath a burning love to God. The second is benignity by speech, that Paul speaketh here. The third Paul telleth that charity hath no envy; and he speaketh of charity in the name of the man that holdeth it. And thus, men may not envy, and yet reprove men in Christ's name, for love that they have to God, and for profit to his church. For thus did Christ full sharply, and he could not be without this love. The fourth condition of this love is, that it doth nought amiss. For what thing he doeth, his last intent is to God's will, and so to the profit of his church, according to the law that he hath given. And thus all these four sects* seem to fail in charity; for they leave God's law, and work by their feigned findings, and so they leave God's worship, and travail most for their own winning. The fifth condition of this love is, that it swelleth not to pride. For he thinks meekly how he is a low servant of God. And so hypocrisy makes not that he lift up himself over reason. The sixth manner of charity is, that it is not covetous. Each man should covet bliss, and to do virtuous deeds. But Paul speaketh of covetousness which is contrary to this end. As many men languish for pride, to have a state that God wills not. And thus all the four sects seem to fail in this point; for they covet that man's will go forth, and God's will be

* The four orders of friars.

put back; and so they have always envy, and do amiss as proud men; for they covet their own worship, and leave the worship of God. The seventh condition of love is, that it seeketh not his own things; but to the worship of God, and to the profit of his church, he intendeth to do his deeds, according to the law that God hath given. And here it seems that the four sects fail in this point. For each seeks that his rule and his order be maintained, more than the common order of Christ, or the law that he hath given. The eighth condition of this love is, that it is not stirred unto wrath. For since he is patient, and knows that God must have his will, he holds himself paid with what befalls, in that it is God's will. And this fails in these four sects, for they take their own vengeance, beside the law that God hath given, as if they were higher than antichrist. The ninth condition of this love is, that it contriveth not evil. For it contrives all to the worship of God, and the means that lead thereto; whereas these four sects cast to have their own will more busily than the will of God, and then they are all evil. The tenth condition of this love is, that it joyeth not of wickedness, but it hath sorrow that any man doeth against God's will. But yet of the same thing hath he both sorrow and joy. He hath sorrow of the sin, by reason that it displeaseth God; and he hath joy of the same by reason God punisheth it well. And here it seems that these four sects have joy of their own things, and say that God forbad that Christ's ordinance should be fulfilled. And thus they reverse in deed the will of God in many manners. The eleventh condition of this love is, that he joyeth in the truth. Truth is God and his law. And when this law is well kept, then this charity hath joy. And here these four orders seem to grudge much against this truth; for they magnify their laws, and execute them busily; but that God's law be broken, they reckon too little, so that their state stand. The twelfth condition of this love is, that it suffereth all things; for it joyeth of all truth, inasmuch as it pleaseth God. Why will not these four sects suffer that God's word reign, and that Christ's ordinance stand whole, since it were best, as they grant? But certainly then all these four sects should leave their patrons and their rules, and come to Christ's sect. And who should grudge against this? The thirteenth condition of this love is, that it believeth all things. For thing and

truth here is all one. And thus it believeth and assenteth to all manner of truth and reason. But faileth he not here that hindereth Christ's ordinance, and doth harm to many, both to their body and to their soul? The fourteenth condition of this love is, that it hopeth all things. For it hopeth that ordained truth helpeth all good men. And this charity hopeth to have part of this help. Here fail these new sects, which dread that they should fail of worldly favour, and worldly winning, and that God's law shall be kept holy. And thus they despair in life of the fruit of God's law. The fifteenth condition of this love is, that it sustaineth all things. For it helpeth to hold all truth, and abideth the end thereof. For after the day of doom shall be the fruit of all truth; and these who are impatient that God's law should right them, fail in this condition, since they trust in men's law. The sixteenth condition, and the last that followeth this charity is, that it never falleth away; neither in this world, nor in the other. For God's love may not fail, since God may not cease to ordain these men to come to bliss, whom he will ever have in bliss. And this love that is in God must have such charity in man.

Look thou at these conditions, whether thou have them all in thee; and if thou have them not, bestir to have them all whole. And then without doubt thou hast this love that must bring thee to bliss. And of this Paul teaches the excellence of charity. And this is the third part of this epistle, and makes end of this glorious lore. Charity is wonderful good, as men may see of words here before. And charity must ever last, either in life, either in half life, for it is not fully clean before we come to bliss.

But whether prophecies should be voided, or that tongues should cease, or that science should be destroyed, and all these three must needs fail, this charity shall never fail. For somewhat we know in certain, as the being of one God; and somewhat we prophesy, as things of the last day; but when that shall come which is perfect, this which is imperfect shall be put away. And so, since at the day of doom men shall have full knowledge and bliss, the degrees of knowledge and joys here must needs pass, and the ending must needs come. And thus saith Paul of himself, and so it is of all this church, When I was little, I spake as young; but when I was made man, I avoided the works

of a young child. And so it is of all men that shall come after to bliss. We see now by a mirror in far sight, and imperfect, but we shall see after in bliss the First Truth, face to face. Paul saith he knoweth now by a part, and not fully; and then he shall know in bliss as he is known fully of God.

And of these words may men gather, that these three virtues, belief, and hope, and charity now dwell; but the greatest of these is charity. And so if this epistle of Paul were fully executed, as it should be, the realm of England should be cleared of these four sects that are spoken of. And then might the realm dispend many hundred thousand marks more than it dispendeth now, if all these sects were avoided.* Mark what all these sects dispend in our realm for a year, and give all this to men in charity. For if these four fail in charity, our realm should draw from them this part. But reckon how much this cometh to; and begin thou to learn of them what thing is the sacred command, by reason of God's belief; and that they tell here to the king only things that they will stand by, to suffer martyrdom of men, and loss of all that they have of our realm. And then might the king know how he should put out all these four. And he might dispend more by many a hundred thousand marks, and the realm were more plenteous to bring forth men to the bliss of heaven. And thus it is for kings to do, by the office that God hath given them.

VII.

THE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST.

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, &c.
Ephesians v.

Paul biddeth in this epistle that men should be God's children, and follow Christ in manner of life, as his dear children. And here men should take as belief, that each man is required to follow Christ upon pain of damning in hell.

For if a man will be saved, he must needs be God's child; and if a man be God's child, then he followeth God in manners. And this childhood is the dearest that may fall here to man. Some men are called a man's children

* See note respecting the Supplication of the Beggars, Frith, p. 59, for a calculation of the sums collected by the friars.

whom they love for his qualities; and this childhood is dear if it be grounded in virtues. Some men are men's children, for they came of them; and this childhood is better if virtues be joined thereto. But some men are children of God, for they live in virtues, and love God's law to their end; and these are the dearest children; and therefore Paul here biddeth that we should be followers of God, as most dear children. And blind men withstand here again, when men allege Christ's deeds, and his life, and his words, and say, Lo, this heretic would be even (equal) with Christ. But no man may be so. Here, these fools should know that it is different to follow Christ in manner of living, and to be equal with him. Each man should desire the first, but no christian man can be the second; and so each christian man should learn of the life, work, and words of Christ, and thereafter follow him, either near or farther off. For if he depart from Christ in this, he goeth straight to hell. And men may see that this is excusing in sin. And therefore saith Paul after, That we should walk in love, but as Christ hath loved us. And by ensample of this love each man should love his brother. And therefore saith Christ by John, A new commandment I give you, that ye love together, as I have loved you. Christ gave himself for us, both offering and sacrifice to God, that is his Father, into smelling of sweetness.

It is known, by belief, how mankind trespassed to God, and how by God's righteousness that trespass must needs be punished; and how it might not be punished, and yet mankind be saved, unless Christ, both God and man, had offered himself upon the tree. This offering was sacrifice made to God for our good. And here saith Christ, by John, that no man hath more love than this, to put his life for brethren, and thus Christ is of most love. We should follow Christ afar in this love, according to our power, and offer our body to the Father of heaven, for love and profit of our neighbour. And since each man should follow God both by body and by soul, each man should here follow Christ by true service to God. And since this martyrdom of Christ was so sweet before God, Paul well calls it an offering to God into smelling of sweetness. For deeds that please to God must smell well before him. And here many men say, that men slain in worldly cause are but stinking martyrs, and offerings to the fiend.

Hereof Paul concludes that five sins should be fled,

as is fornication, and all uncleanness; or avarice, sin of the world, not to be named in you as beseemeth holy men; or filthy or foolish speech; or ribaldry, that pertains not to things of bliss. But use ye your speech more cleanly in thinking of God; for know this, and understand as the belief of christian men, that each lecher, or unclean man, ravenous man, or that worshippeth images, hath no heritage in the realm of Christ, who is both God and man. Since each man maketh that his God which he loveth most of all; and a covetous man loveth worldly goods more than he loveth God. Since he leaveth righteousness for love of such worldly goods, it is known that it is false, and out of right belief of God; for he maketh such goods his idols which must needs be false gods.

And thus it is of other sins which men oft fall into. In the first fleshly sin are many sorts; and Paul understandeth them all by uncleanness, as some men say. Other men say well enough, that Paul telleth of these three sins, fleshly sin, and sin of the fiend, and the sin of the world, as all sins. For though all sins are unclean, yet these three sins of the fiend, pride, envy, and ire, three sisters, make more like to the fiend, and by this print of the fiend, they are more foul before God.

Paul bids true men, that no man beguile them in belief by vain words which they speak, that these are not sins, or only light ones. As they say that licentiousness is natural; and that man should have love of his own excellence, since that God hath given it him; and that God hath given this world to man, to serve him by help thereof. Such vain words that excuse sin, do much harm among men. As Adam and Eve were beguiled by vain speech of the serpent, and so were many others by disbelieving the truth of God's law. For if we take heed to God's ire, either in the old law or in the new, it came by sin, that was brought in by such false and beguiling words. And therefore should ye not be perceivers of them, neither speaking thus, nor believing, nor darkening by such false speech. For ye were sometime in darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord. Men that are encumbered in sin are made dark and blind with sin; but men that are in the light of grace know sins, as we see motes in sunbeams. Therefore walk ye, as children of light, in holiness. The fruit of light standeth in these three, in all manner of goodness, and in all manner of righteousness, and in truth.

VIII.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come, &c. Heb. ix.

This epistle telleth the excellency that Christ had over the bishops* of the old law, although they all figured Christ. And this is pertinent to speak to Jews, that knew the old law. And Christ surpassed bishops of the old law in three points. First, he was Bishop of the goods of bliss, the which goods are hoped for to come. And thus saith Peter, that Christ is Bishop of souls, for he is Lord of them. Bishops of the old law had sacrifices, and did some good, in that they figured Christ and his passion that bought mankind. The other excellence of Christ is, that his tabernacle is better than were all the tabernacles that were in the old law. For Christ's tabernacle is the world. And Paul saith, that this tabernacle is more large, and more perfect than the tabernacle of Moses. For this was not made by man, but made of nought, by God almighty; but Moses's tabernacle was made by great travail of priests. The third excellence of Christ is, that his sacrifice was better, and made more perfectly than the sacrifices of the old bishops. Bishops of the old law sacrificed lamb's blood, or blood of goats, or of calves; but Christ surpassed all these figures. For Christ, by his own blood, entered once into heaven, and there he found everlasting blessing, that none other bishop might come to. And so Jesus entered once for ever to heaven, the inner part of this temple; but bishops of the old law needed to enter year by year; and yet they entered not into heaven, but into a little place that was in the west part of the tabernacle. And although this figured heaven, yet man's bliss was not herein. But the entering of Christ to heaven, into a place more holy and more large, was into the place where there is bliss without end. And thus since Christ is God of heaven, and his manhood is so nigh God, our Bishop, Christ, in all these things must needs pass all other bishops. For as this Lord may reach far, so he is nearer and more gracious; and except by virtue of this Bishop, might never bishop do good to man. And thus dignities and privileges, that are now granted by the pope, unless Christ confirm them first, are not worth a

* Priests.

flea's foot. And so it seems to some men that bishops of the old law were better, and more worthy than these emperor's bishops; for they served and figured Christ by authority of God; but these emperor's bishops now serve and figure antichrist; and their authority is taken of the fiend against Christ, and thus they say that the pope is the head vicar of this fiend. But all the bishops, and all the fiends, must have their being of Christ, and serve him, either well or evil against their will. For either they are damned in hell with the highest antichrist; or else they are blessed in heaven by our Bishop, Jesus Christ.

And afterward Paul proves, by a principle of belief, the sufficiency of Christ, beginning that he is both God and man; for if Christ be very man, he is a part of all mankind. And so, by this grace, man is made sufficient by Christ, although he sinned in Adam. And thus saith Paul to his brethren, that if blood of kids or bulls and the ashes of a calf that is scattered maketh men holy that were fouled as to fleshly cleansing, how much more Christ's blood, that offered himself by the Holy Ghost, without spot to God the Father, shall cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. This reason that Paul makes is the belief that men must have.

There are three cleansings; bodily and spiritual, and one cleansing which partakes of the two; as was cleansing of the old law. For this bodily cleansing of these figures of the old law, cleansed not spiritually, but in figure; for other cleansing were better by water. And so it figured Christ's blood, and his heart that was burnt by love; and this hallowing that last was figured, must needs be better than its figure, as the fire is better than smoke, and man is better than his image. And so, since Christ is God and man, satisfaction for this sin that he made thus freely, is better than any other that man or angel might make. The same man in number that sinned by Adam, our first father; the same man in number made satisfaction by the second Adam, Christ. And since he is of more virtue than the first Adam might be, and his pain was much more than the sinful lust of the first Adam, who should have conscience here that this sin is not all cleansed out?

And since our Jesus is very God, who never may forget this meed, he is sufficient medicine for all sinners that are contrite. For Christ is ever and everywhere, and in all such souls by grace, and so he cleanseth more cleanly than

any body or figure may cleanse. And therefore, as Paul saith, Christ is Mediator of the new law; for Christ hath of both these two; for he is God, author of these both, and knitteth the one with the other, and that by his death, in atoning for the first trespasses that were done in the old law. These men take the promise again that are called to a lasting heritage. All this purchase was done in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We take here as belief, that Jesus Christ who purchased thus, is every good that may be; and so the same God that made man, and after bought man to the bliss which he ordained before to man. And let men take as belief that all things which God hath ordained must needs come, in his time, after the form that God hath shapen.

IX.

THE VICTORY OVER THE WORLD.

Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world, &c.
1 John v.

John stirreth christian men to flee sin that cometh of the world. And this sin is full common in all three parts of the church. First, christian men should know that all men who should have bliss of heaven, are spiritually born of God, and made men of his order; since Christ must be their Father, and holy church their mother. And John setteth these conditions that must needs be fulfilled. Each that is born of God, overcometh the world in all his time; for if he be overcome of the world for a little time, so that he sinneth, nevertheless, he must overcome the world at last. For else he was never born of Christ, nor followeth his Father in this fight. And Christ will have no children but those that follow him. Therefore John telleth to men a mean to overcome the world. And this, he saith, is the victory that overcometh the world—our belief, (or faith.) So that none overcome the world nor the fiend, nor his flesh, unless belief or faith is the armour by which he thus overcometh.

And therefore Paul declareth to the Hebrews, that saints overcame realms by the belief that they had, and made many other victories. And shortly, there is no man overcome of his spiritual enemy unless he is out of belief, either in one manner or in another. And thus, by some manner of

speech, belief is both the shield and sword by which man fighteth, and the victory that he maketh. John asks for example, Who is he, brethren, that overcometh the world, but that man who believeth that Jesus is God's Son? If thou have full belief of Christ, how he lived here in earth, and how he overcame the world, thou overcomest it as a kind son; for if thou take heed how Christ despised it, and follow him here as thou shouldest, thou must needs overcome it by belief of thy Father. And here may men know plainly that many are in this world who are not born of God, nor believe here in Christ; for if this belief were in them, they should follow Christ in manner of life. But they are out of belief, as many men are as to the day of doom. What man that should believe fully that the day of doom is at hand, and that God judgeth men after they have fought in his cause, would not busily enforce himself to follow Christ therefore? Either the belief of these men sleepeth, or they want right belief; as men that love this world and rest therein, live as if God saw not this, and should not judge for this deed. Thus our belief of Christ's life, is needful to all christian men. And therefore men should know the gospel, for it telleth the belief of Christ.

And thus it seems that the new orders* overcome not this world by belief that they have in Christ; for Christ lived not as they live now. Christ purchased not for his apostles cities, nor houses, nor worldly goods; but taught them, both openly and in private, to flee such having of the world. And thus the falsehood hidden of the fiend deceiveth men of such orders. They say that they have the world in common, but none of them to himself. When they have the world thus in common, each of them assenteth to the world, and they are altogether more strong to hinder men that do against the same, either in word or in deed; and thus the fiend's champion is strong. Such sophisms serve of nought before Christ, the last Judge. And thus these sophisters prate that they have nought, neither separate nor in common, and yet men see all day that they have both places and houses, and other goods, more plenteously than the poor men that they rob.† These false men must needs be damned of Christ, who is the Truth. For they differ nought from thieves, but that they rob more sinfully, even to the greatest man of them who is more strong in his malice.

* The friars.

† See note, p. 76.

This is he that came by water and by blood—Jesus Christ. He came not to the bliss of heaven by hypocrisy or falsehood, but by tribulation and by shedding of his blood. And thus he was also made Jesus, that is, Saviour of this world. And he was also made Christ, to anoint men by the will of his grace, by virtue of his passion, and not by worldly life here. For he was the head of martyrs, and suffered most pain. On this should his sons think, and follow their Father in this manner. For if they follow a new manner, and leave the manner that Christ taught, they leave Christ and follow antichrist, as false men do that shall be fiends. And thus Christ came, not only in water, but in water and in blood. For he suffered not tribulation, as many men do; but tribulation and suffering from great fervour of charity. And by this cause, saith Paul, God called Christ, and gave him a name that is over all other names, and most of worship in this world. And there is sufficient witness of this sentence both in heaven and in earth. The Holy Ghost is he that witnesseth in high heaven that Christ is truth. For there are three that give witness in heaven—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are all one. And there are three that give witness in earth—the soul, water, and blood: and these three are all one; for they make Christ's manhood. And so all this special substance, that is, the Godhead of Christ, is three persons and one God. So this common substance is one Person of Christ. And thus when Christ cried with a loud voice, he sent out his man's spirit, and he shed water and blood, from the time that he was dead. These three things betoken well that Christ was very man and God. And in the time that Christ was baptized, the Father witnessed in voice, the Son was showed in manhood, and the Holy Ghost as in a dove. And these three are sufficient witness to teach our belief of Christ. For if we take witness of men, witness of God that is three persons, is more to prove this belief, and this is more witness of God that he witnessed thus of his Son. And God is everywhere. Whoso believeth in the Son of God, he hath witness of God in him, since he hath the Trinity.

X.

OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Now I go my way to Him that sent me, &c. John xvi.

This gospel of John telleth of things that are to come before the day of doom. And for that Christ's ascension was nigh, therefore Christ told a word of his ascension, that his apostles should believe. Christ, to whom all things that shall be are present, said upon the Thursday that he should die on the morrow, I go to Him that hath sent me to the earth. And that for a great office, to buy the church of men. And although my going is as open as it was hid before times, none of you asketh me whither I go. But yet, for that I have spoken these things unto you, ye believe not but lightly that they are truth; and so a hidden sorrow hath filled your hearts. For I have told you I shall suffer, how I shall be reproved, and how I shall die, and how I shall after be ascended from you; and how I shall dwell in heaven, till I come at the last day to judge the world to joy or to pain. And these words shall make friends to mourn among themselves. But I say truth to you, it profiteth to you that I go; for if I go not, the Holy Ghost shall not come to you: and if I shall go, I shall send him to you. And when he shall come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, also of judgment.

But this shall be understood thus; God shall reprove this world of sin, of untruth, for they believed not in me. And this is the first sin and the most unkind that they might do to God. For since Christ came to this world, and became our brother, to buy us, and always to profit mankind; and he is so openly truth, showed thus unto man; it is a great sin to believe not here to Christ, for by sinning as to this faith, unkind men believe not to this Father, and to Christ, and also to the Holy Ghost. For the Holy Trinity witnesseth this. And as belief is the first virtue and ground of all other, so unbelief is the first sin of all other. And therefore, this sin, taken by itself, is taken for the most noted. Of this sin shall the Holy Ghost reprove men of this world.

Secondly, the Holy Ghost shall reprove men of righteousness, that they should have to Christ, and yet they unkindly want it. For such a messenger should be worshipped of all men, and praised for such a message, since it was so profitable. And so the world shall be condemned for

wanting of this righteousness; and especially that such a Person goeth again to his Father. And it shows that Christ is the second Person in the Trinity, and so by his Godhead equal with his Father; and by his manhood, less, but equal in nature with his brethren. And thus right would require that this Person were worshipped.

The third time, this Holy Ghost shall reprove men of this world, for that they judged foolishly, that Christ was led with a fiend; and yet the most high fiend, the prince of this world, is now judged to hell. For he tempted Christ, and did him worship.

Christ farther saith, I have many things to say to you, but ye may not bear them now. But the Spirit of truth shall come to you, and he shall teach you all truth, and make you strong to bear truth, even to the suffering of death therefor. This good Master shall here begin to teach the book of life, and he shall never end to teach till that his disciples come to heaven; and thus they shall clearly know each truth that man can tell. He shall not speak of himself without cause: but all things that he shall hear of the Father and of the Son shall he speak and tell you, and ye shall after teach his church. And things that thereafter are to come, shall this Holy Ghost tell you. For the apostles here know all that now there is need to know; for in this measure God led them, and moved them to do his deeds. For he charged them not with idle knowledge that they should be proud; but all they needed to know, they knew readily.

This Holy Ghost shall enlighten me; for he shall take of mine, and show you the truth that I am, and that I have. And so in knowing of this truth, the apostles shall well know Christ: how by his Godhead he is equal with the Father; and concerning his manhood, he is one in nature with his brethren. But in grace he passeth all men that may be; since no man may be God but he; and the well or source of grace as he is. And here Christ declareth himself, and saith that all that are his Father's are his; and therefore he said the Holy Ghost shall take of his and show to his disciples, as apostles and others after them. And in these high words of knowledge, Christ teacheth how he is with his Father, the same God in kind, and bringeth forth the Holy Ghost. For else the Father had his Spirit, and the Son had not the same Spirit: and so not all that the Father hath, had Christ as very God. But since this word of Christ is truth, it showeth openly that Christ is God.

And of him, with his Father, cometh forth the Holy Ghost. This Holy Ghost may not be made, but ever cometh forth of these two; as of the shining of the sun ever cometh forth light and brightness. But for that this sentence is much hid from knowledge of the common people, therefore should priests shape of this gospel what might profit to his people for understanding of them. And we should mark these words of Christ, when he saith to his disciples, if he go not from them to heaven, he shall not send them the Holy Ghost. And many muse of these words, since Christ was everywhere almighty, and so he might as well on earth as in heaven send them the Holy Ghost. Then what needed Christ to ascend to heaven, and speak by mouth with his Spirit? Such words show men are full rude (ignorant) to conceive this matter. And therefore it were needful for them to know the intent of these words.

We shall believe that Christ's disciples loved him here too worldly; and they must be cleansed here of this love, by the Holy Ghost. And these things might best be done when the manhood of Christ was gone from them. And thus for the rudeness of the apostles, Christ saith that it speedeth that he go from them. But he dwelleth by his Godhead, and by his virtue, ever with them. And therefore he saith another time, that he is all days with them, unto the end of the world, by his Godhead, and the virtue of his manhood. And thus, when Christ was gone to heaven, his apostles were clean in love, and left the love of earthly things, and thought wholly on heavenly things.

And of this, men take knowledge somewhat, that it falleth not to Christ's vicar, nor to priests of holy church, to have rents in earth; but Jesus should be their rent, as he saith oft in the old law. And their bodily sustenance they should have of God's part, as of tythes and offerings, and other alms taken in measure, the which by their holy life they should enable them to take thus. Since the body of Christ being present, indisposed the apostles to take this Holy Ghost, much more should worldly lordship make men unable now to take this Holy Ghost. And since they have now a spirit, it is likely by their deeds that they have a wicked spirit that leads them an evil way. And in this world we may see how the religious that are to-day are more drawn to their habits and to their ordinances, than Christ would that his apostles should charge as to the presence of his body. And therefore Christ sent his apostles alone, scattering into the world. And certainly they

were more able now, than when he sent them two and two; for now they were more ripe by the Holy Ghost, and more confirmed than they were before. But our friars that are sick, and closed now in cloisters, gather more than Christ's twelve apostles. And this seemeth by the fiend's contrivance, that if one black not his brother, another should defile them worse. And therefore some friars have sense to hold themselves far from such a lump, and go forth into the world, and then should they have a good spirit. For thus did Christ with his disciples, and him they should follow in life.

XI.

LOVE TO CHRIST.

If a man love me he will keep my words, &c. John xiv.

In this gospel Christ moveth his children to love. For charity is the best robe that any man may have. And therefore saith God's law, that love is strong as death. For love moveth men to suffer death gladly in God's cause. As where death is that which man dreadeth most, this love passeth nature, and makes men to covet such death. And this will is not harmful, but glorious to men; since by such love men are inflamed and become as angels of heaven. First, Christ saith thus, if any man love him, he shall keep his word; for that is the same truth; and since God is kind to men that love him thus, Christ saith that his Father shall love him again. And if his Father love a man, the two other persons of the blessed Trinity love him, and all such love of God must needs be evermore. And the manhood of Christ worketh thus by this love. It shall bring with Christ such members of him to heaven, and so to clear sight of the Holy Trinity. And so Christ with his members shall make their dwelling without end, by love of the Holy Ghost; for saints in heaven may not pass this end; for then they were fools choosing a worse end. For Christ will show himself united to those that love him and keep his words; therefore he saith, He that loveth him not, he keepeth not his words. And therefore Christ, in describing a man that loveth him, saith thus afterwards in the same gospel, He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them in his life, he it is that loveth me well. Here we may know when a man loves God; for if he love God, he loveth

his law, and words of the gospel, for they all come to one; and if he loveth not God's law, he loveth not his God. And therefore each man who loveth not thus God's word, that he would die to defend it, he loveth not his God as he should love him. For it is all one to love God and love his word; and as much as thou lovest God, shouldest thou love his word, but for love of thy God thou shouldest lose thy life, for defence of Christ's law. And in cowardice of this love* be many men smitten. But knights by order† should be ready in this love.

But that Christ saith that men should keep his words, many men might muse what these words mean. But Christ saith that all these words are truths; as ten truths of the commandments, and all without end. And so he that keepeth not the words of Christ, he keepeth not his one word, the which they have heard. And this one word which they have heard, is not Christ's, but his own Father's. For it is Christ's person, and Christ is not Christ's son, but the Son of the Father. And thus we may see the worth of God's word. The words of God are many by diversity of reason; but they all run together to one middle point, and so they all are God's word, that is himself. And as these words are dark to the people, therefore Christ giveth them a comfort in this matter; and saith, that he had spoken these things unto them, while dwelling with them, and they were yet misty: but the Comforter, that is, the Holy Ghost, which the Father shall send in the name of Christ, shall teach them all things that now were hid to men.

And thus it befalls unto men to know rudely first, and generally, as philosophers speak, and after should they know more fully the same thing. And thus Christ in his manhood told first by misty words.‡ And God since by his power showed more fully of him: and as the Holy Ghost shall have order of this lore, so first he shall move men's ears and sensible voices; and after he shall be slidden in, and have taught men's thoughts in all that Christ hath spoken before in general words, they shall not cease to learn more fully. But ever in this life they wax more ripe till they come to heaven, and there know all fully. And since peace of man's soul disposeth him to learn, therefore Christ promiseth his children this peace, and saith thus,

* From fear to profess the love of Christ.
† The soldiers of Christ by their profession. ‡ Parables.

Peace I leave to you, and my peace I give you. Christ knew that he himself should soon pass from his children; for on the Thursday at night he said to them these words, and on the morrow at noon he died for their love. And therefore he promised them that he would leave them peace.

But Christ specifieth this general peace, when he saith that he giveth them his own peace. And this shall be first with pursuing of body, that it shall grow after to most full peace. And therefore saith Christ, that not as the world giveth he giveth them, but on a contrary manner. The world giveth things that now are pleasing; but by process of time they wax more bitter, and so they come to pain and sorrow which at first were pleasing. And so peace of this world is evermore distressing; but peace of God groweth unto full peace.

And in these words of knowledge Christ comforteth his children, and biddeth them that their hearts be not troubled nor dread. For whoever fully believes this sentence, and hopes fully that he were of the number of these children, he were an untrue man if he dread thus. Apostles dreaded perils that were nigh, but they failed not to believe this truth, that they should not have a good end. And that whatever befell them should fall to them for the better. And as the world is secure of things nigh to it, and in doubt of things afar off, so in a contrary manner, Christ's children are secure of their end, but of things nigh at hand they are sometimes in dread. And the ground of this sentence is christian men's belief. And therefore Christ saith, Ye heard how I said to you, I go, and I come to you. And he that believeth fully these words of Christ, he should not dread this sentence. For Christ saith, as God to whom all things are present, I go, and I come to you for certainty thereof. And as Christ was certain of his death, and his going up, and of his coming again at the day of doom, so should his children be certain of this aforesaid sentence. And yet Christ moveth his children to have joy of his going; and this was a point for which they mourned most. And Christ saith thus to them to abate their mourning, If ye loved me, ye should have joy, for I go to my Father, since he is more than I. For thus by manhood I should increase in bliss. And he that joyeth not therefore, he loveth not Christ; and it is told before how each man should love him. He said, And now I said to you before that it befall, that when it is done ye believe in my saying. And so

should they believe to all things that he had said. For thus he is God that can will all things.

And Christ, teaching his children to mark better his words, saith that he shall now speak but few things unto them, but they should have the most enmity here of the head fiend whom Christ hath overcome. Therefore he telleth them that the prince of this world is come to tempt Christ, and he hath nought in him. And thus in this overcoming should men not dread the fiend; but he saith, All this is done that the world know that I love the Father, and so should ye do. For all things that I do should be ensample to you; and therefore I do as my Father commanded me, for well I know in this I may not fail. And all this sentence of the gospel of John is fully pertaining to the coming of the Holy Ghost.

XII.

OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant, &c. 1 Cor. xii.

Paul moveth in this epistle, that for the former kindness of Christ men should be kind to him again. For clerks say, and truth it is, that both God and kind* hate that a man dwell unkind, after great kindness that he hath taken. For truth it is, that all sin turneth to unkindness to God. And thus Paul brings to these men's mind how much kindness Christ hath done them. Ye know, saith he, when ye were heathen, ye were led to dumb mawmets,† going as beasts from one to another, as if ye had no soul of man.

And since a man's god should be a thing that were the fairest and the best; in which should be the health‡ of men, and make men's soul like to them; the foulest thing that falleth to man, and the most perilous to his soul, is to have a false god, as men have that worship mawmets. For they make their souls foul, to the great peril of their souls. And thus it is a foul thing to be led as a bear to a stake by the untruth of a fiend, to love aught as it were God, which is not God, for all such things are false gods. And thus saith Paul, that none that speaketh in God's Spirit, putteth

* Nature. † Idols. ‡ Salvation.

cursedness to Christ,* since all the Trinity approved him, and both his deeds and his words were holy and full of reason and love.

And thus men say commonly, that false men in three manners put cursedness to Christ, and all these are damnable. First, when men by open sin, are not kindly to Christ, as all sinful men do for the time that their will is turned amiss. The second saying of cursedness that false men put against Christ, is to say with heart and word that Christ was a false prophet, and to curse him by unbelief, as the Jews did long time. The third cursing, and the worst that false men put unto Christ, is, that they feign the name of Christ, and his goodness with his law; and yet they make false this in deed, and say that other law is better; as men of these four sorts, that put behind Christ's law, and take them a new patron and new rule, without Christ.† These men are hypocrites whom Christ hateth most of all.

And thus saith Paul after, as a truth following of his words, That none may say Lord Jesus, but in the Holy Ghost. Paul speaketh here of saying, that is, saying fully formed, as is the saying of true men in heart, word, and in deed, that say rightly to God's worship, in the name of the Trinity. What man can believe we may say, Lord Jesus is our Lord, our Saviour from the fiend, unless the Holy Ghost teach him? for then he maketh no departing from Christ's Godhead and his manhood. But whatever Christ hath ordained or said was done to his church, he at point denies. And into this cursing fall these sects that despise Christ's law, as if his ordinance failed, but their ordinance is much better! For what man should choose another law, unless that law were better than Christ's; for he is a fool of all fools that thus chooseth a worse way, and leaveth the better way to heaven, which is more light and more ready. For he putteth to Jesus Christ both cursing and deceit, when he saith by his deed, that Christ hid the better way and the perfect way, till God had sent these sects. And these sects came not fully out till that Satan was unbound. Among all blasphemies that ever sprung, this is the most cursed. For they teach openly in deed, that thus it is, however men gloss.

But although the two natures of Christ are diverse in themselves, yet these two are one God, and there are no

* No man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed, 1 Cor. xii. 3.

† The four orders of friars.

more gods. And thus men should in their thoughts think how division of things cometh of this one God, the which God is a Spirit. And therefore saith Paul after, that there are divisions of grace, but it is the same Spirit, of whom come all these graces, as of one source come many streams. And thus of the same Spirit must come divisions of services. For this one God must have servants according to the grace that he giveth. For this Lord loveth degrees in his servants. And thus there are divisions of workings, and yet it is the same God that worketh all, in all things. For who should grudge for these divisions, since they are thus ordained of God; as each part of a man must have these three, diverse in order. As first he must have a hidden power; and of this power comes his will; and of this power and this will come workings to men's profit. And thus, as it is in man, so it is in holy church; and joy we of this ordinance of God, since it is both fair and good.

And thus Paul declareth nine degrees of men's workings that God hath ordained in the church. For each member of holy church hath some showing of this Spirit, both to his profit and to the profit of the church. As to some, by gift of God is given the word of wisdom. For some men have some knowledge here of truths of the high Trinity. And another hath word of knowledge after the same Spirit. For some have knowing of God, both of angels and of heavens; and how this word cometh of God, by fair order that he hath ordained. Other men have belief of hidden and of high things. And all these three come of God, who giveth these to his church. Some have grace of healths,* both bodily and spiritual, both to have them in themselves, and to give them to other brethren. And God is that one Spirit of whom all these graces come. God giveth another to work virtues, and especially to know God's virtue, and how God of his gracious virtue hath given men power to work virtues; as in the parting of the sea, and in the standing up of the same; and in many other wonders that God hath done for man's sake. And yet the wisdom of God for profit of his church, giveth prophecy to some men, to follow good and flee evil; as John had in the Apocalypse, and some men after him have less. To others is given discretion to know spirits. And this is a great gift that cometh of the Holy Ghost. For such spirits move men to divers works. And it is a good gift of God, to know good spirits

* Salvation.

from evil; for good spirits move men ever to virtuous deeds; and evil spirits move men to evil, and beguile men.

The same Spirit giveth to men divers manner of languages; as this Holy Ghost gave the apostles knowledge and tongues at Pentecost. And at the last this Spirit giveth men to understand knowledge of words; as the Spirit giveth many men to know what holy writ meaneth. And all these three gifts of God are especially from the Holy Ghost; but yet since all these three persons are one God and one Spirit, none of them giveth any of these, except they all three give them. For one God doth all good, and thus he parteth these things to men after his power, wisdom, and will. And thus he divideth nought amiss, although the reason be hid from us.

XIII.

PAUL'S PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, &c. 1 Cor. xv.

In this epistle Paul teaches by many reasons how his gospel is to be praised of true men, for the fruit of bliss that cometh thereof; and the word evangele, or gospel, means good tidings of bliss. And thus not only the four gospels, but the epistles of Paul and of the other apostles are called gospel here and in many other places. And thus men are out of belief that deny that these are gospels. And therefore saith Paul, Here I make known to you the gospel that I have preached to you; the which ye have received, in which gospel ye stand yet, and by which, if God will, ye shall be saved.

And thus may true men see how this gospel is to be praised for many reasons, by the fruit that springeth to men by this gospel. First, by authority of God who spake this. For precious liquor and precious vessel, should be praised of them that take it. This liquor is wisdom of God. And this liquor should be thought more dear worth than oil of tombs;* for it healeth men's souls more than such oil healeth men's bodies. And right taking of this knowledge is another reason to praise it. And since it

* Consecrated oil, supposed to avail to the healing of the sick. See the Rituale Romanum.

raiseth up man's soul, and maketh it thus stand in belief, Paul tells as the third reason why men should praise this gospel.

The fourth reason that Paul giveth of the praising of this gospel is, that it is a nigh mean to save men in bliss of heaven. And Paul boasteth not here of this gospel for his person, but by reason of his God, of whom this gospel sprung by grace. And this should move true men to take this gospel and leave fables. And Paul telleth hereafter of this gospel how men should last therein. For else his travail thereabout were idle and without fruit. For the praising of God's word, and holding thereof in man's mind, should be to produce belief in men, and thereby bring forth good works. And Paul saith, Unless this follow, they have believed here in vain. As clerks say, that travail is vain of which cometh not the good end, that men should shape to come thereof by the grace and ordinance of God.

And thus saith Paul, For what reason should I have preached thus to you, and ye should have holden this lore, but for coming of this end? And if this end come not, ye have believed here in vain. I betook first to you lore that I have taken of God, that Christ was dead for our sins, after the witness of holy writ; and better witness may none be, for then must God witness it. Christ died not for his own sin, as thieves die for their sin; but Christ, our brother, that might not sin, died for sin that others have done. And both righteousness of God and grace, and saving of men, moved Christ to die thus. And not only sin of men, for then Christ had died for nought and idly without cause. I told you more of belief, how that Christ was after buried, and how he rose on the third day, by the witness of holy writ. And that this belief was written in the book of life, and men's souls, and also dead bodies.

Paul calls it many scriptures; and Paul tells of six degrees, by which Christ was seen to live after that he was dead. And this faith should be believed in. Paul telleth that Peter saw him, and after him all the apostles; and after when Christ went up to heaven, more than five hundred of men saw him together. For they were warned before hereof, and therefore more came to see this. And some of them lived to the time of Paul, and some of them were dead before. And after was Christ seen of James, and afterward of all the apostles. And at last of all

was Christ seen by Paul. And thus Paul, as a child that was born out of time, destroyed the sin of the synagogue; as some children when they are born are the death of the mother. So thus Paul destroyed the synagogue when he came to Christ's church.

Paul saith meekly of himself, that he is the least of apostles; that he is not worthy of himself for to be called an apostle, for he pursued God's church. Here we should understand that Paul saith truth as he should, since none should tell falsehood for any cause. Paul saith that he is least of apostles in his own counting; for Paul was wonderfully meek; and he tells how he came by grace after others. And the cause of this unworthiness is, that he pursued God's church. And therefore saith Paul after, By grace of God I am that I am. And thus he is not worthy even to be called a christian man. But nevertheless the grace of God was not idle in St. Paul. For it moved him to profit to the church, which he had harmed before. And thus men may praise God in the gifts that he hath given them. But think we how Paul travailed for to get worship to God, and let us follow him, inasmuch as Paul thus followed Christ.

XIV.

THE MINISTRATION OF THE GOSPEL.

And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward; not that we are sufficient of ourselves, &c. 2 Cor. iii.

Paul telleth of the excellency of the grace of the new law over the grace of the old law, to come lightlier to heaven. And Paul begins thus, We have such trust by Christ as the best mean to God, that we are not sufficient to think aught of ourselves, but our sufficiency is wholly of God. For since man's thinking seems most to be in his power among his works, and yet his thought must come of God, surely more each other work of man. It is known that no creature may do aright, but if God do it first, and help his creature to do it. And since we have a better procurator,* in time of grace, to pray to God, than men had in the old law, no wonder if this time be better. And thus should we put off pride, and wholly trust in Jesus Christ. For he that may not think of himself, may do nought of himself; but all our

* Intercessor.

sufficiency is of God, by the means of Jesus Christ. And since Christ is both God and man, he is both Judge and Procurator. And these words are belief, since each power is of God. And so each sufficiency of man must necessarily be given of God. And if thou grudge here again, and say that man doth evil works, and God doth all that a man doth, and so God doth many evils; true men grant concerning God, that each creature of the world, whether it be good or evil, is made of God, Lord of all; but sin which is no creature, but default of man or angel, is not made of our God, since to do it is to fail towards God. But if sin were a creature that might be of itself, then sin must needs be made of God, and man might make that it were sin.

This mediator, Christ, made apostles and their vicars fit servants of the new law. And this advancement is great, for it is holden a great grace to be a pope or other prelate; but it is a thousand fold more grace to be a minister as Christ hath ordained, for the gain is more, and the service more holy. For since the new testament is the last law of God, and bringeth men next to heaven; these ministers bring men by grace that God himself giveth, and worketh thus with these ministers. And this is a fit and a high service that priests should have; but if they keep not well this office, none are fouler traitors than they. And great diversity is betwixt them, and priests of the old law; for priests of the old law did figure of the grace that now is done by Christ. And therefore saith Paul here, that priests of the new law work now, not by letter, but by the Spirit that God giveth. And this word men understand thus, that priests in the new law have pleasant service and light, and are not killers of beasts, as were the priests of the old law; but the grace that they figured, is now made of God by his priests. And therefore saith Paul, that priests work now, not by letter, but by spirit.

And here antichrist's tyrants speak against the new law, and say that literal knowledge of it should never be taken, but spiritual knowledge. And they feign this spiritual knowledge after the wicked will that they have. And thus these four sects are about to destroy literal knowledge of God's law, which should be the first and the most, by which the church should be ruled. And against this knowledge antichrist argues many ways that holy writ is false. And so they say there is another meaning than this literal

meaning that thou hast given. And this is a doubtful meaning which I will choose to give. And thus authority of holy writ fails by antichrist. But Paul saith to this intent, that if in the time of grace the letter of the old law is taken, and held that it should ever last, as it lasted for that time, it slayeth men in a spiritual manner; for it hindereth men of the belief that they are now nearer to bliss than they were in the old law, by the coming of Christ in time of grace. But leave we these heresies, and believe we that many things were commanded the fathers of the old law, as types of things to come in time of grace. And these figures shall we understand spiritually, for else literal understanding will slay man's soul by unbelief.

But spiritual understanding quickens man's soul by right belief. And if thou wilt know the ground to judge of these understandings, begin at christian man's belief, and believe that Christ hath now lived here, as it was figured in the old law, and look not for it as yet to come. And so each word of the new law that speaketh of the virtues of Christ, and to charity of his church, should be taken according to the letter. And therefore, as Augustine tells, heretics are condemned, who denied the literal meaning for understanding God's law. And thus saith Paul after, that if the serving of death written by letters in stones was in glory of Moses, so that the children of Israel might not look into his face, for the glory of his shining, that was soon after done away, how much more the spiritual service of christian priests shall be in this time in glory; since this glory is more, and increases unto bliss. And if men would understand the reason that Paul maketh here, it were needful to know how the face of Moses shined, when he came down out of Sinai, and gave the law written in stones, and so the people durst not look into Moses' face that was shining with light. And thus their spiritual eyes were hid when they looked to this Moses; but he hid his shining face, and the people spake then to him. And since Christ in the new law printed it in his apostles' hearts, much more their spiritual service should be in glory, than was Moses. For printing in their souls was better than printing in the stones; and the shining of grace of Christ passed bodily shining in Moses' face. And this service in Moses' law is called serving of death. For many had death of soul, and death of body always followed this serving. But serving

in the new law quickens some till they come to bliss. And thus this writing in letters was not equal to writing in men's souls.

Paul afterward makes mention of another knowledge; that if the service of condemning of many was to the glory of Moses, much more the service of righteousness to Christ's children should be for glory. As though it were said, Since this hid figure that brought men but far from bliss, was of so much glory and worship to men that had but little belief, much more the law of Christ, and the service that his priests do, should be in more worship and joy, since it is near to the state of bliss.

XV.

THE PROMISES MADE TO ABRAHAM.

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, &c. Gal. iii.

Paul tells, in this epistle, the excellency of Christ and the time of the gospel, over the time of the old law, even if men kept well that law. Paul notes first this word, that to Abraham were said promises, and to the seed of him. God saith not, "and to his seeds," as in many, but as in one; and to his Seed, that is Christ, Paul notes, as true men should note each varying of God's word; since no varying therein is without cause and reason. And thus, when God promised Abraham that he should give that land to him, and to his seed, he said not in the plural, that he should give it to his seeds; but in the singular, to his seed, for the especialty that was in Christ. And that land was but a figure of the high land of bliss. And thus Abraham had but a figure to come after to the bliss of heaven. And also, when God promiseth that all folk should be blessed in Abraham's seed, he meaneth by this, Jesus Christ, who blesseth in joy all manner of folk. And by this true men understand that Christ, in giving of his law, did all things without default, both in working and resting. So that no resting or leaving was done of Christ without cause.

Paul saith, that this promise which God made to Abraham, was a testament confirmed of God, which promise was made law four hundred and thirty years after. Here must men know the story, and the wise manner of Paul's speech. It is known by God's law, how God promised to Abraham,

that four hundred years, and more, his seed should serve in Egypt, and they should after go to the land of promise ; and how, in the way, God gave Moses the law written in the mount. And all this law was in effect promise that God had made to Abraham ; since this law was but a lore to bring his seed to the bliss of heaven. And so saith Paul after, that the making of this into law makes not void the promise of God, but rather confirms it. And so the gracious promise of God was the ground of giving of this bliss, and not the law that God gave Moses, although after it helped thereto. And thus saith Paul truly, that if the heritage of bliss of heaven were grounded on the old law, then it were not grounded of God, by the gracious promise that he made. But this is known to be false belief, and so this first word is truth, that God gave this promise to Abraham.

And if thou say, What then served this law, since bliss was not grounded thereon? The law was put for trespassers, that would have been too bold, unless the law had thus chastised them ; and so this law was profitable. But this law had three parts : the first part taught men virtues ; the second part taught men judgment ; and the third part taught men figures. The first part must ever last, both in the old law and in the new. Some of the second part may last, that teaches just judgments now. And if it be rigorous or impertinent to our trespass, it shall cease as Christ did mercy to the woman that was taken in adultery, as the gospel telleth. These figures, or ceremonies, that betokened the coming of Christ must needs cease in the time of grace, since Christ, the end of them, is now come. And else we should expect, as the Jews, a new coming of Christ hereafter.

And to this intent Paul speaks, that the law was put for trespassers till the time that Christ came, who was seed of Abraham, to which Seed God promised that it should fully buy mankind. For Christ was made a mediator betwixt God and mankind. And God put in Christ's hand a law that he had ordained before by angels. And thus Christ taught the old law, as Lord thereof over pharisees. And of this word, Mediator, Paul showeth wisely, that Christ is both God and man, for else he might not thus be a mean of reconciliation. A mediator must have two parties, and accord in reason with them both. And since the parties are God and man, Christ must needs be these two. And since there is but one God, Christ must needs be

almighty; and so Christ may give the new law, and suspend somewhat of the old; and since he may not be contrary to himself his law may not be contrary to his promises. And therefore, Paul saith after, that God forbid that the law be against God's promises, for then God would reverse himself.

Paul teaches after, how needful Christ was, as this mediator; since the old law brought not man to be fully righteous, for then one doing of this law should justify man's nature. And therefore saith Paul thus, that if a law were given that might quicken of itself, then by law life were right grounded. As if Paul would say thus, beside the old law that was given, must come a man to make satisfaction; and this must be both God and man. But this law concluded well that all mankind was under sin; and by occasion evil taken, sin was aggravated by this law. And the blessed end of all this sorrow was contained in Jesus Christ, that the promise made to Abraham should be given by faith of him. So that if men believe in Christ, and make a point of this belief, then the promise that God hath made, to come into the land of life, shall be given by virtue of Christ, to all men that make this the chief matter. And here men may openly see how much antichrist is to blame, who after the free law of Christ giveth another contrary law. For it hindereth the keeping of Christ's law, and putteth men from the freedom of Christ.

XVI.

CHRIST PREACHING AT NAZARETH.

And Jesus came to Nazareth, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, &c. Luke iv.

This gospel tells how Christ preached. Jesus went out in power of the Spirit into Galilee. True men hold as belief, that the Holy Ghost led Jesus whithersoever he went, and in what deeds soever he did. And fame went out through all the land of him; and Christ taught in their synagogues, and was magnified of them all. And Christ came to Nazareth, where he was nourished; and he entered, according to his custom on Saturday, into a synagogue. And hereof christian men take custom to preach on Sunday; for it comes to us for sabbath instead of Saturday, as Luke saith

here. And so should priests follow Christ's example, preaching on the sabbath, that is Sunday.

And Christ rose up to read; and the book of Isaiah the prophet was given him to read. As Christ turned the book, he found the place where it is written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; wherefore he anointed me to preach, he sent me to poor men. And so the Holy Ghost bade me preach to prisoners forgiveness, and to blind men sight; to lead broken men into remission, to preach the year that the Lord accepteth. This preaching now is all disused and turned to pride and covetousness. For however men may please the people, and win them worship with money, that they preach, and put back the profit of the people's souls. This book was ordained of God to be read in this place; for all things that befell to Christ were ordained to come thus. And so men say that Christ had the office of all ministers in the church.

And Christ praised Isaiah much, and these things read by Christ have better order than we can tell. For the Holy Ghost was on Christ, both in his body and in his soul, since Christ was both God and man, and by his manhood led of God. And therefore this Spirit anointed Christ with God's grace as fully as any man might be anointed. And thus Christ must needs preach to meek men that would take it. For this is the best deed that man doth here to his brethren. And so Christ preached to prisoners the forgiving of their sins; and to men blind in knowledge, sight to know the will of God; and to lead broken men in forgiveness of their travail. And Christ preached the year of our Lord that was acceptable by himself. For he made the year of jubilee; and the day of giving of mercy and bliss was preached of Christ. And so all these words sound mercy and comfort of Christ, to men that are in prison here, for old sins that they have done.

And when Christ had folded this book he gave it to the minister, and he sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were looking to him. And Christ began to say to them, This day is this writing fulfilled in your eyes, on me; for Isaiah said these words as a man that prophesied of Christ. And all men gave him witness, and all wondered at the words of grace that came forth of his mouth. Of this deed of Christ men take that it is lawful for to write and afterward to read a sermon, for thus did Christ our Lord and Master; for if

men may thus turn the people, what should hinder them to have this manner. Surely travail of the preacher, or the name of having of good understanding should not be the end of preaching, but profit to the souls of the people. And however this end cometh best, is most pleasing to God. And curious preaching of Latin is full far from this end, for many preach themselves, and fail to preach Jesus Christ; and so sermons do less good than they did in meek* times.

XVII.

CHRIST ONE WITH THE FATHER.

Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work, &c. John v.

This gospel tells how the false Jews accused Christ of blasphemy, and so they charged him with heresy, for these two are joined together. John saith, how Christ told them, that his Father worketh till now, and Christ worketh also. It is said before that the works of the Trinity must be all together. And so as there is no changing in this Holy Trinity, therefore this gospel speaketh with words of present time. The Father worketh evermore, and the Holy Ghost with Christ. But as Christ was man, he worked by his double nature, by his Godhead and by his manhood. The second working is evident. And therefore saith Christ, that his Father worketh till now, and Christ worketh. By this he did not mean that the Father then ceased to work, but that Christ hath a new nature by which now he ruleth this world; and this vicar kind† came when Christ was made man. And therefore the Jews sought Jesus, to slay him as a blasphemer, not only for that he brake the sabbath, but said his Father was God, and made himself equal to God. But Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son may do nought of himself, but that he doth is the Father doing; for what things the Father doth, the same the Son doth also.

And Christ saith here openly, that he is the same God with the Father, and maketh all this world of nought, as the Father maketh it. And yet the Father bringeth forth

* Humbler. † Vicarious nature.

the Son, and the Son may not bring forth himself, but this bringing forth is neither making nor working, for it is without end. For if the sun were without end, his shining were without end. And so it is in the Trinity, of the bringing forth of two persons; and thus might the Jews know that Christ had both Godhead and manhood. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that he doth; and shall show him more works than these, that ye have wonder of them. And this was done in Christ's death and resurrection. For these were more than the miracles, although they show the same might. For each work of creature tells the almighty power of God. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but he gave all judgment to the Son, that all men worship the Son, as they worship the Father. And here Christ speaketh of judgment of another kind than the judgment of God within, since the judgment of this manhood shall be seen and ended at the day of doom. And by this judgment, as Christ saith here, the Father judgeth no man. He that worshippeth not the Son, worshippeth not the Father that sent him, and so he worshippeth not God, but breaketh all the ten commands. And since worshipping of Christ standeth in holding of the new law, and following of Christ in manner of life, how many now worship not God. And this worship of the Son is more than to worship a messenger; for this Son is the same God, two natures in one person.

Truly, truly, I say to you, that he that heareth my word, and believeth in him that sent me, hath life without end, and cometh not unto judgment, but passeth from death into life. And here the hearing is taken for obedience of the soul, and judgment for reproving of the world. Truly, truly, I say to you that the time cometh and now it is, when the dead shall hear the voice of God's Son, and whoso hear it they shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, even so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and gave him power to do judgment, for he thus is man's Son. And wonder not at this; for the time cometh in which all that are in graves shall hear the voice of God's Son; and those men that have done good shall go into the rising of life, and those men that have done evil shall rise to be condemned in hell. These words tell more knowledge than we can utter, or may tell. But it is known that there

are two manner of dead men, those in bodily and those in spiritual death. And at the day of doom all dead men shall rise bodily; and by virtue of Christ's word some dead men rise spiritually, for they turn to good life, and hold the words of Christ.

XVIII.

THE GOSPEL REVEALED TO BABES.

Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, &c. Matt. xi.

This gospel telleth how Christ answered to feigned words of the people, and told many high truths to the instruction of his church. Matthew tells how Jesus in that time answered to the people, and said on this manner, I confess to thee, Lord, Father of heaven and earth, that hideth these truths from worldly wise men and wary, and showedst them to meek men and the despised of the world. And the last cause hereof is told thus by Christ, Yea, Father, thou didst thus, for it was pleasing to thee. We shall understand hereby that each confession is not whispering in an ear a man's own sin, but the granting of truth with the granting of God. And thus speaketh Christ, who is of more authority than all these popes that ordained confession and rowning.* And here may we see how God is Christ's Father, without end, before that he be Lord; but he is ever Lord of this broad world. And this world is understood by heaven and by earth. This truth that Christ confessed, falling to the apostles, standeth in this word, that they knew many truths which were hidden to wise men and the wary of the world, as were the scribes and pharisees, and other worldly men. And the cause of this deed of God is open to true men; for God will show to men how all wisdom is of him, and he will give it freely to meek men whom he loveth.

And that the disciples of Christ should believe his speech, he told what befalleth him by virtue of his Godhead. Christ saith that all things are given to him of his Father; and no man knew fully God's Son, but his own Father; and no man knew the Father but his Son, and other men to whom

* Whispering, private confession to a priest.

he would show himself. The first of these three words teacheth that Christ is God. For else the Father might not give him all things. For if we understand by all things all creatures, yet the Son is before, that he have all creatures, and in that being before, he must needs be God. And if we understand all things to be within God, and that Christ hath all these given him of his Father; Christ must needs be God, if this gift be true; for then Christ hath the Holy Ghost, and the properties of the three Persons, and the Father of heaven in a manner; the which may only accord to God. And so, for the first word is truth, Christ must needs be God. And of this will it follow that Christ is almighty, all wise, and all willing, as the Trinity is. For Christ is the same God, as is the Trinity. And of this will follow the other word after, that no reasonable thing knoweth the Son, at the full, but the Father of heaven; for they always are equal. And according to this speech of the Trinity which is equal in himself, should Christ speak of this knowledge, which is the greatest that may be. The third word followeth of these, That no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and those men to whom this Son will show this knowledge. The people might see by their eyes that Christ was very man. And so Christ cometh down to man's speech of knowledge. The Son by his Godhead knoweth the Father, and by that he is man, he knoweth as much as man may know. And so his knowledge must be communicated to men after that they are able. The Holy Ghost is the same nature that is the Father and the Son; and therefore Christ supposing this, leaveth to speak of this Spirit; and of this may men gather how men should here believe Christ's words; since he is God that may not lie, nor fail to man in his love.

And for Christ is both God and man, and hath brethren of his lesser kind, (or his human nature,) therefore he turns unto his brethren, and comforteth them in their travail. Come ye all to me, saith Christ, that travail and are charged, and I shall refresh you. Take ye my yoke upon you, and learn ye of me this lesson, that I am mild and meek of heart, and follow ye your Father in these, and then shall ye find rest to your souls in your travail. For my yoke is sweet, and my charge is light. And these words of Christ to comfort religious men, are better than all these new rules that are clouted on to Christ's words. For in what state thou art in Christ's religion, learn well the lesson

of mildness and meekness of Christ, how he kept them all his life, in what trouble soever he was in; and if thou art of God's people, thou shalt live meekly after Christ.

XIX.

HATRED OF THE WORLD TO CHRIST.

These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, it hated me, &c. John xv.

This gospel tells, as Christ doth oft by John, how men should love together, and put away the hindrances. For the beginning and the ending of God's law is love. Christ begins thus, and commands his disciples, These things I bid to you, that ye love together. Nothing is more bidden of God than this love, and therefore, when man leaves it, he despiseth God. But all should know this love, since it is the same to love a thing and to will good to it. Each thing should be loved in that it is good, and so God should be most loved; and better men rather than worse men. And we should, for God's love, love evil people, and for this love be busy to give them matter to be better; and as much as in us is, do good to each man, to make some better, and to make some less evil. But the chief love should we have to ourselves, and to our father, and to our mother, saving the order of God's law.

The first hindrance of this love that Christ telleth here, is the hate of this world to men that keep this love. For the world is so blinded, that it calleth hate love, and love it calleth hate, for it errs in belief. All our love should stand in the love of God; to keep his law, and to move others to keep it. But many, for default of faith, hold this a folly; for goods of this world fall not to such men. And therefore saith Christ, if the world hate you, ye should well know that it hated me before. And this worthiness of Christ, who suffered thus for man, should move true and good men to suffer for Christ. If thou grudgest against poverty, and covetest worldly lordship, know thou that Christ before was poorer than thou, since he had not by his manhood a place to rest his head in. If thou grudgest that thy subjects will not give thee goods, think how Christ's subjects would neither give him meat nor harbour, and yet he cursed them not therefore, but did them much good. And if thou

grudgest that the world doth thee any injury, and thou profitest again to the world in love and meekness, think how Christ before thee profited thus more to the world; and yet Christ suffered more wrong of his subjects than thou mayest do. And thus, if thou wouldest think on Christ, how he suffered for love of man, it were the best ensample that thou shouldest have to suffer, and to cease thy grudging. For as Augustine saith, "No man in this world may sin, but when leaving that which Christ taught, or grudging against that which he suffered." And for this saith Christ, If ye were of the world, the world would love that which is his.

In this law is found, both in good and evil, that men love others like to them. Yea, even if they shall be damned for this. As one sinful man loves another for the likeness of their sin, and yet they shall both in hell suffer harm for this likeness. And thus it is no wonder if the members of the fiend hate the members of Christ; for they are so much contrary here, and after the day of doom.

And this moves many men to hate these new religious;* for this new diversity quenches love and makes hate; yea, they have the fiend's manner so that they hate their own brethren, and torment them because they hold with God's law against heresy. And certainly they love others too little, but feign to spoil them of their goods. And thus saith Christ to his disciples, That as they are not of this world, but he hath chosen them out of this world, therefore the world hateth them. And if thou learnest of the world to hate thus, thy love is quenched; but if thou withdrawest from the world, then thou lovest these men in God. For the world here is taken for men overcome by the world, who love worldly things more than God's law or good of virtues; and of this world saith Christ, that it hateth his disciples. And for that this lore passes other in profit and in holiness, therefore Christ bids them to think on this word that he here said to them, for then they overcome this world. And therefore saith John the evangelist, Brethren, what man is he that overcometh the world? Certainly none but if he believe that Jesus is God's Son.

If we hold this ground in faith, that Christ is very God and man, and beside this, believe well his life, and all his words that he saith, we shall overcome this world, and all the helpers of the fiend. For as Christ saith truly, There is no servant greater than his lord; and so Christ is more,

* The followers of the truth.

both in virtue and in worthiness than any other man may be. And since Christ suffered thus, and taught christian men this lore, what man should we believe or follow in our life but Christ? and neither the world nor the fiend may in this harm a man. And so Christ comforteth his members. If men of this world have pursued Christ, then they shall pursue his members; and if they have kept his words, they shall keep his disciples' words. For it is more hard for fiends to pursue the person of Christ, than to pursue his members; and thus will they do the easier.

But one comfort lieth here, that as Christ converted some that were men of the world, so shall his disciples do; and thus they shall not work in vain, to keep his law as he bids. For each man that shall work, must have a hope of some good end, for despairing of such an end would hinder a man to work. But the blindness of the world that tormenteth Christ with his members, is so ignorant in belief, that they know not Christ's Father. For if they knew well Christ's Father, then after, they should know his Son, and that these two are one God. But then who would strive against this God? and so the default of belief and ignorance that men have cause all evil deeds; and thus each sinner is a fool. And if men knew God's power, and his wisdom in these two persons; how he may not forget to punish sin when it is time, then should men dread to sin, for it is known of these two persons. But this faith is otherwise wanting, or sleeping. But Christ reproves unbelief, and saith, if he had not come and spoken thus with them, they should not have had this sin. For it was great unkindness in this manner to treat their brother, that always meekly did so great kindness again; and it was an open untruth in this manner to hate their God. But now these Jews have no excuse for this sin; and therefore Christ saith, that what man hateth him he hateth his Father also, for they are both one. And for in each kind of things there is one first, or chief, that measures all others which are in that kind, therefore in manner of sins must be one first of all others, and mark all the others. And that is the sin of priests against Jesus Christ. And therefore saith Christ, that if he had not done works in them that none other man did, they had not had this sin. But now they say, they have this faith, and yet they hated both Christ and his Father. And so was verified the writing in their own law, That the Jews wilfully had Christ in hate.

XX.

CHRIST TO BE CONFESSED.

There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; nor hid that shall not be known, &c. Matt. x.

This gospel comforts martyrs and destroys the hidden sin that is in these new orders contrary to the order of Christ.* Christ saith, that nought is concealed that shall not be showed; and nothing is so private that it shall not be known. These words are of belief, for all things are known of God; and that mirror shows forth the most secret thing in this world; and at the day of doom, when books shall be open, which books are men's souls and their consciences, then shall both good and evil know men's works and their thoughts. Therefore should all men boldly stand by truth, and especially by God's law, for therein lies no shame. And therefore Christ bids, that what he hath said in darkness, they should say in light, more commonly and more clearly, both in life and in word; and this rule of Christ's order should men keep, but especially priests. And to this intent Christ biddeth, that what they have heard in their ear they should preach openly upon the flat roofs of the houses. For thus should the common men better understand, and thus wills Christ, that all things which God speaketh to the ears of the soul, these hearers should speak forth.

But since that such preaching asks hardness and martyrdom, therefore Christ comforteth his, to dread not the slaying of body. Dread not, saith Christ, those men that slay the body, and may not after slay the soul, nor can they hinder God to quicken that which they kill, and to make it better; but rather dread ye him that hath power to cast both the body and the soul into hell for evermore, to dwell there in pain. Are not two sparrows sold for the least money in chaffering? For as Luke tells, five were sold for two farthings, and yet God ordaineth for all these fowls; and since these fowls are little of price, and uncertain in their moving, and yet God ordaineth for them whenever they light upon the earth; much more God should ordain for each man that hath a soul to God's image, and especially for such men that serve truly to their God, more than any fowl may; for they are not able to serve thus. And since God ordaineth thus for fowls, men either must grant God to be unwise,

* The four orders of friars.

or he should ordain much more for men that are his true servants. And this reason that Christ maketh, moves true men that have wisdom to be hardy in God's cause, and to suffer martyrdom for him. And no man can avoid that other men should thus suffer, or else be untrue to God, as these heretics are. And thus saith Christ of God's wisdom, that all the hairs of his disciples are numbered to God's knowing, and none of them may perish without. And since the hairs of men's heads are the least worth of any part of man, and none of these may perish unknown, how should the better part perish? And thus martyrs are comforted to put their body for God's law. For no part of their body may thus perish to harm them, and much more the souls of such men, and all virtues of their soul may not perish from them; for the soul may not be quenched; and necessarily after the soul must follow the virtues thereof. And Christ saith truly to his apostles, that they should not dread, since they are better than many sparrows. And our belief teaches us that God keeps things according to their value: for if any thing be better, God makes it to be better. And so Christ speaketh here a word that should move men to stand with him. Each man that shall acknowledge me before men by both my natures, I shall acknowledge that man before my Father, to that man's honour. Here we shall understand that the confession Christ maketh here is not whispering in a priest's ear, to tell him the sins that we have done, but it is granting of truth, the which is openly said, with readiness to suffer therefore, whatever man denies it. And so that man confesses Christ who grants that he is God and man, and all things that will follow hereof. And there are full many truths; for all the gospel that Christ saith, such a man must confess, and all that followeth of the gospel. And this displeases sinful men.

And certainly a man confesses not Christ that he is both God and man, unless he confess of Christ, that he may no way sin; nor prates, or bears false witness of any word that Christ hath said. And so each word of God's law is true, since Christ witnesseth it and each truth that is therein. And so each priest confesses Christ before men, who tells them that Christ is both God and man; and thus Christ saith, who may not lie. And certainly if a man say thus, and fail not for cowardice to tell God's law to men that sin, he puts them well to martyrdom; and every such man, Christ saith, he will confess to his Father. And then

Christ will confess this man to be true in God's cause, and worthy to have recompense according to the worthiness of his travail, and to be crowned without end in heaven before this great Lord, who faileth not to give to such servants, but gives them bliss of heaven; for the greatness of such a Lord rewards not less his soldiers.

If a man travailed in war with a captain, and this captain wrote of him to his king, and said that he was a good warrior, and worthily and hardily travailed in the king's cause, and therefore this earthly king should have him and his commended—how much more were it worth that the follower of Jesus Christ be commended by his own word as a true servant unto God, and told that God should think on him and give him bliss without end. And as confession of truth is to be loved of God's knights, so confession of cowardice is to be dreaded of men in earth. And thus, default of belief hindereth men to travail in God's cause. But the words of this gospel are evil understood of many who by logic that they have, grant that all the hairs of saints are well known of God, but say that God knoweth not how many they are in number. And they argue that all these hairs be none, since they are without number, and each great thing in earth were made of parts indivisible!* And such errors that men have in logic, and in natural science, bring men in as heretics, to grant many false things. Truth it is that God knoweth all the parts of a man, and how many these parts are; for they are few to God's knowledge. And so each thing that God continueth is made of indivisible parts, and the greater thing hath more such; this is hidden to men's knowing, but they shall know it well, when God shall show it them in heaven.

XXI.

WATCHFULNESS ENFORCED.

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, &c. Luke xii.

This gospel teaches all men how they should live to Christ, but especially prelates that should be light to the

* A specimen of the unintelligible logic of that day, then often applied to theological subjects.

people. First Christ biddeth his disciples, that their loins be girt, and lanterns burning in their hands, as they should meet their Lord when he cometh again from bridals. These loins that Christ speaketh of are the fleshly nature joined with the soul. This flesh serves to the soul, suffering as it should suffer, and doing as it should do, when it is taught well of the soul. And thus saith Paul that Christ was in Abraham's loins.

These loins are girt when man with discretion draws from his flesh the nourishment thereof, or chastises it on other manner before it fall into sin. Burning lanterns are needful works, that men have in their power, by which they should work. And, because these works came both of body and of soul, therefore they are called of Christ two lanterns; and they are in our hands when we work with them. For it is not enough to keep us from sins unless we work good works by these two lanterns.

For these bridals we shall know that they are taken in many manners; first, for the weddings wherein Christ is joined with the soul; and after, for the dwelling that Christ dwelleth in with the soul; and thirdly, for the spiritual food that souls are fed with Christ in bliss. And so there are three weddings that Christ is wedded here; first, when he took mankind and made it one person with him; after, when he taketh his church and maketh it one spouse with him; the third is when Christ taketh any soul in particular to him. And so Christ is said to return again from bridals on two manners. First, when a man is dead, whom Christ hath ordained to come to bliss, Christ turneth again to his soul. But then he must have there dwelt before, or else this soul had not come to this state. And so we should be like to men that abide the coming of Christ in time of death or day of doom. And this abiding should all manner of men mark; for this coming is uncertain, and this time is perilous. And to these comings of Christ should each man make him ready, since Christ shall come and knock at doors and enter to them that are waking, and ready to receive Christ, without sleeping in sin. And Christ knocketh at our doors when he teacheth us signs of death, or signs of the day of doom; but the last knocking is sudden. If man be ready before to dwell with Christ without end, then he opens to Christ, since this opening is readiness.

And thus saith Christ full truly, that those servants are blessed who when the Lord cometh he findeth thus waking.

Truly I say to you that this Lord shall gird himself, and make them sit to meat, and pass and minister to them.

The sitting to meat of saints, is confirming them in bliss. The passing of this Lord by them, is his showing to one and to another. This service is light to Christ, for it is Christ's showing of his Godhead and his manhood, in which saints shall be fed.

And if this Lord come in this second vigil,* and also in the third, and find such readiness in these servants, full blessed are these servants; since they quickly are blessed of God. The three vigils that Christ telleth of here are three wakings from sin, and always of the last sin, which is the worst evil that may be. And so we pray God in the paternoster to deliver us from this evil. And as the length of these three vigils is uncertain to man, therefore he should ever wake, and then he waketh these three vigils.

The ignorance of these times, and the knowing that we should ever wake, profits unto God's children; as do all things, as Paul saith. Since we know not the quantity of these three times, we should evermore be in dread, and ever wake out of sin. And this lore Christ teacheth in a parable to his children. This thing, he saith, know well, that if the master knew what time the thief would come and steal his goods, he would wake full busily, and not suffer this thief thus to break his house and spoil him. It is touched before, how this thief is the fiend, that doth all his diligence to tempt man when he shall die. And when the fiend hopeth to overcome; and when the night of sin blinds men to know themselves, then is time for the fiend to fight fastest. This thief ever worketh by deceits, and fighteth blithest in hour of darkness; and in time of man's death he strives most to overcome. For this victory shall ever last, on whatever side it fall.

This house is man's body, that his soul is kept in; and the undermining of this house may be done in two manners. First when the fiend supposes that a man shall die there, he gathers together man's spirits, and tempts him to many sins, as to wrath, to lechery, and especially to despair. But let us seek blessing with the Trinity, and think on God in this case; and against the first sin, think we meekly on God's power, how God is stronger than the fiend, and without him may we not do. And such thought of the Father of heaven should overcome the fiend in hour of

* Watch, or portion of time in which a person keeps watch.

death. Against the second sin of the fiend, we should think on God the Son; how kindly he is spouse to us, and bought us with his precious blood; and how he may not part from us, if our unkindness be not in the cause. We should think how fair and good a spouse is Christ, and how foul is the fiend; and by thoughts Christ would give virtue to men to overcome the fiend, when he tempteth man in the hour of death to think on evil. Against despair we should think of the goodness of the Holy Ghost; how our good God may not leave us, if our folly be not in the cause. And if we have sinned ever so much, and ever so long have laid in sin, ask we God for mercy in our thoughts, and have we sorrow for this sin; and God is ready to forgive it, however priests fail. For the fiend may be away from man's soul, but not God; and the mercy of God is more than envy of the fiend; and the goodness of God is more than the hate of the fiend. What should move men to despair, since they may so easily be saved? And nothing is more in man's power, than the thought of his soul.

But we must have a love-dread of our God in this hour, since we know that old sin may be so hard then in our soul, that we shall not be then in power to againstand the tempting of the fiend. For as a staff may grow so great, and be so stiff in its strength, that men shall not writhe it, though they would be ever so fain, so sin may grow in man, and be so strong in time of death, that righteousness of God then will hinder man to obey thus to God, this dread of God we should have, and always in the hour of our death. And this is a good defence against the fiend and despair, but this must be a love-dread, and hope in love of God, how that God hath more love than the fiend hath envy: for God's love is without end, but this envy is foul and feeble. And this envy may not overcome the virtue of God's love; for the love that God loveth righteousness, maketh overcoming in this hour.

Since our good God giveth us strength to love him, and to hope in him; and the fiend may not hinder us to think on this gift of God; what man should despair of God in the hour that God departeth the soul? God suffereth the fiend to hasten a man to his death, but God will never suffer that a man may not freely think on him. And if his power be so barred, the sin of man is the cause, and reasons of the fiend are blinded in this matter. The fiend puts to us the great sins that we have done in work and thought.

And for the greatness of these sins, God's righteousness hath strengthened us. We will answer here, We grant meekly that we have sinned in thought, in word, and in deed; but we know that God's grace is much more than all our sin. And the fool knows not how God hath made us now. For we feel the grace of God, how we hope in his goodness, and sorrow for our sin; and this the fiend knoweth not. But yet the fiend argueth thus, Some man must be damned, but who should be damned but thou, who thus hast been unkind to God? Here we answer, that he saith the truth, but how can this fiend prove that God will have me damned, since I have hope in my soul which is hidden to the fiend? And well I know, the fiend knoweth not this secret ordinance of God, as he knew not his own condemnation, how God made it to the bliss of saints; but yet the fiend argues that all things which shall come, must needs come by the ordinance of God, and thus the fiend thinks he shall have of me a glorious victory.

But here we answer to this fiend, and grant him that which he taketh, and so he must needs be damned for the folly that he is in. He travaileth busily to have victory over us, but yet we hope that he shall fail, by sparkles of grace that we feel. And well we know as belief, if the fiend overcome us, it shall not be glorious to him, but more to his damnation. For ever the more harm that he doth, ever the worse shall he be punished, and so men that shall be damned with him shall ever be painful to him. For he shall grieve that he did so much evil. And so the fiends shut up in fast bonds for ever, shall ever grieve together. What man that knows these fools tastes should be overcome with this fiend, since our good God is so nigh, and his mercy is so great, and the folly of this proud fiend in boasting of things that he knoweth not is so offensive before God, and so known to God's children.

THE

DISCIPLES OF WICKLIFF.

The appellation of Lollard was early given to the followers of Wickliff. There are various opinions respecting the origin of this name, but that of Mosheim appears the most probable. He considers that it was derived from a German word, *lollen;* signifying to sing with a low voice. It originated upon the continent, and from the middle of the eleventh century was applied to persons distinguished for their piety: they were generally remarkable for devotional singing.

The number of Wickliff's disciples at the time of his decease is described by Knighton, a canon of Leicester, his contemporary.* He says, "The number of those who believed in Wickliff's doctrine very much increased, and were multiplied like suckers growing from the root of a tree. They every where filled the kingdom; so that a man could scarcely meet two people on the road but one of them was a disciple of Wickliff." Knighton also says, "They so prevailed by their laborious urging of their doctrines, that they gained over the half of the people, or a still greater proportion, to their sect. Some embraced their doctrines heartily, others they compelled to join them from fear or shame." In another place he accuses them of causing divisions in families—the followers of the truth ever have been opposed by "parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends." The testimony of Knighton is valuable. It is the evidence of an enemy who fails in bringing forward any just cause of accusation. That a people so persecuted could compel others to belong to them, is a charge too improbable to need refutation.

In reality, the followers of the Reformer were of two classes. The first included those who felt disgust at the usurpations of the popedom, and the vices of the Romish priesthood, while they cared little for the doctrinal errors of that church, though they could not but perceive their opposition to scripture, and even to common sense. When we remember the conflicts in which the king and parliament of England had been engaged with the papacy during many years, and the impunity with which ecclesiastics were allowed to pursue their profligate courses, we may well suppose that a large portion of the community entertained the sentiments just described; so that Knighton's statement of every second

* Twysden, Decem Scriptores, col. 2663.

person in the kingdom being a disciple of Wickliff, may scarcely have been an exaggeration when so understood.

But there was another class whose attachment to the doctrines of the Reformer was of a more spiritual nature; who felt the evil of sin, and desired to live holy unto God: these were far less numerous. They are described by Reinher, an inquisitor of those times. He says, "The disciples of Wickliff are men of a serious, modest deportment; they avoid all ostentation in dress, mix little with the busy world, and complain of the debauchery of mankind. They maintain themselves entirely by their own labour, despising wealth, being fully content with mere necessaries. They follow no traffic, because it is attended with so much lying, swearing, and cheating. They are chaste and temperate, never seen in taverns, nor amused by vain pleasures. You find them always employed, either learning or teaching. They are concise and devout in their prayers, blaming lifeless tediousness. They never swear, they speak little; in public preaching they lay the chief stress upon charity. They disregard the canonical hours, saying that the Lord's prayer repeated with devotion is better than tedious hours (Romish services) without devotion. They explain the scriptures differently from the interpretations of the holy doctors and church of Rome. They speak little, and with humility; they are well behaved in appearance."

The writings of Wickliff fully demonstrate that he wished his followers to be such as the Romish inquisitor describes them. The nominal followers of Wickliff, those who merely opposed the outward errors of the papacy, will not require our particular notice, although they left many valuable testimonies against the errors of popery, and some in favour of the Lollards. In this number may be included the poets, Chaucer and Gower. Langland, the author of the bold reproofs on the vices of ecclesiastics, contained in the Visions of Piers Plowman, also wrote during the early life of Wickliff.

Among those actuated by higher motives, there were many individuals of rank and influence, who although not separated from the world to the extent above described, yet were sufficiently decided to incur censure from the Roman ecclesiastics. The high rank of one, however, prevented this so far as regarded herself. Ann of Bohemia, the consort of Richard II., evidenced her attachment to the scriptures, copies of which she possessed, and constantly studied. Even the Romish prelate Arundel speaks of her piety and knowledge of the bible, as reflecting shame upon the ignorance of many ecclesiastics. She interfered in behalf of Wickliff; and to the intercourse established between England and her native land, as means, may be ascribed the progress of the gospel in Bohemia, with the subsequent opposition to the errors of popery in that country. The history of the reformation in Bohemia, and the

affecting narratives respecting the Waldenses at this period, should be perused in connection with the accounts of the English Lollards.

Fox, Lewis, and others, mention sir Thomas Latimer, sir Lewis Clifford, the queen mother, John of Gaunt, lord Henry Percy, sir John Montague, the earl of Salisbury, and others, among the protectors of the Lollards, apparently upon principle. But Lord Cobham was the most illustrious in this respect among the British nobility. He laid down his life for the truth. The particulars of his history are given in the following pages. John of Northampton, mayor of London, in 1382, and the following year, was characterised as a Lollard on account of his bold proceedings against persons of wicked life. The terms of reproach applied to the inhabitants of London, on account of the proceedings of their mayor, show that the principles of Wickliff had made considerable progress in the chief city of the land.

Some other adherents of Wickliff claim more distinct notice. Their history presents many interesting particulars of that period. Nicholas Hereford was of Queen's college, Oxford. He was included in some of the proceedings against the Reformer, both at Oxford and in London. The accounts given of him are inconsistent and confused. This is not surprising, as almost the only particulars we possess are given by Romish writers. It appears that he went to Rome, and there defended his opinions in the presence of the pope, by whom he was imprisoned. Being liberated by a popular tumult, he returned to England, where he was imprisoned by the archbishop of Canterbury. From the statement of Thorpe, he seems to have submitted to the church of Rome. Hereford is supposed to have assisted Wickliff in the translation of the scriptures. He was one of the most learned of the followers of the Reformer, but did not possess firmness or consistency. He sat among the clergy who passed judgment, in 1391, upon Walter Brute, and yet, in the following year, he again needed and obtained the royal protection against his enemies.

John Ashton was also included in the proceedings against the Reformer. He was a zealous preacher. Knighton describes him, as "travelling on foot, with a staff in his hand, visiting the churches throughout the kingdom." His vigilance is thus characterised, "He was like a dog raised from sleep, ready to bark at every noise, and as expeditious in passing from one place to another, as if he had been a bee; full of arguments, ready to dogmatize or spread his opinions. He boldly, to the utmost of his power, declared the doctrines of his master Wickliff at the tables of sinful hearts, that he might increase his sect. Nor was he contented with the enticing conclusions of his master, nor ashamed out of his own novel, subtle invention, to add many others, sowing tares among the wheat wherever he

preached." Ashton's fate is uncertain, but it would appear that he retained his profession of the faith, while by some concession he was permitted to resume his scholastic engagements. To Ashton and Hereford, Wickliff is supposed to allude in one of his homilies, which has been quoted in the life of Wickliff, but may be here repeated. "He (Courtney) pursueth a certain priest, because he writeth to men this English, and summoneth him and travaileth him, so that it is hard for him to bear it. And thus he pursueth another priest, by the help of pharisees, because he preacheth Christ's gospel freely and without fables. O men who are on Christ's behalf, help ye now against antichrist, for the perilous times are come which Christ and Paul foretold." Vaughan adds, "We can readily believe that Wickliff's auditory would sympathize with their pastor at this foreboding moment."

Philip Repingdon was a canon of Leicester, and a noted preacher at Oxford. He also was included in the proceedings against Wickliff. For a time he preached very boldly respecting the sacrament, and against the Romish ecclesiastics. But his fall was a decided one. Terrified by the prospect of sufferings, or allured by promotion, he forsook the Lollards, and became a bitter persecutor of the truth. He was afterwards bishop of Lincoln and a cardinal! A sufficient proof that the papists would gladly have induced the principal followers of Wickliff to join their party, had the usual worldly inducements availed for that purpose.

John Purney, or Purvey, was an active preacher like Ashton. Knighton describes him as a simple priest of grave aspect and behaviour, with an appearance of greater sanctity than others. In his dress and habits a common man; giving himself no rest of body, he was unwearied in his endeavours by travelling up and down, to persuade the people and bring them over to his views. He adds, "Being an invincible disciple of his master, John Wickliff, Purney conformed to his opinions, and fearlessly confirmed them like an able executor. For that he boarded with his master when alive, and so having drunk more plentifully of his instructions, he more abundantly sucked them in, and always, even to his dying day, as an inseparable companion, followed both him and his opinions and doctrines, being unwearied in his labours and endeavours to propagate them." Walden calls him, "the library of the Lollards, and the glosser (annotator) upon Wickliff."

Purney was curate to Wickliff during the latter abode of the Reformer at Lutterworth. He is supposed to have written the prologue to the English bible which has by some been attributed to his master, an extract from which will be found in the following pages. It is also conjectured, that to his care we are indebted for a considerable part of the homilies of Wickliff which have been preserved. He was afterwards

imprisoned by Arundel, and by tortures induced to recant at Paul's Cross, in 1396. A small living was then given to him. He is mentioned in Thorpe's examinations as living in conformity to the manners of the world. But his conscience did not allow him to pursue this course. He was imprisoned again in 1421, by archbishop Chichely, and is supposed to have died in confinement.

Knighton mentions several other active Lollards; among them was WILLIAM SWINDERBY. He was originally a hermit. Coming to Leicester he preached against the corruptions of the age, particularly reproving the pride and vanity of females, until, as we are told, "the good and grave women, as well as the bad, threatened to stone him out of the place!" He then addressed the merchants and rich men, denouncing those who neglected heavenly riches for worldly wealth; so often dwelling thereon, that, as the Romish chronicler remarks, had not the divine clemency interposed, he had driven some honest men of the town into despair! Swinderby then became a recluse, but after a short time resumed his preaching, directing his discourses against the errors and vices of popery. Knighton, of course, stigmatizes his doctrines as erroneous, but adds, "He so captivated the affections of the people, that they said they never had seen or heard any one who so well explained the truth." Being excommunicated, and forbidden to preach in any church or churchyard, he made a pulpit of two millstones in the high-street of Leicester, and there preached "in contempt of the bishop." "There," says Knighton, "you might see throngs of people from every part, as well from the town as the country, double the number there used to be when they might hear him lawfully." Swinderby was cited to appear before the bishop at Lincoln, when he was convicted of heresy and errors, for which it is said, "he deserved to be made fuel for the fire." Many of his hearers had accompanied him, and lamented his danger, but the duke of Lancaster being at Lincoln interposed in his behalf; he was allowed to escape upon promising to recant his opinions, and publicly acknowledging them to be errors. He afterwards settled at Coventry, where he preached and taught with greater success than before. Walsingham, another Romish historian, says, that the multitude raged in his behalf, so as to deter the bishop of Lincoln from further measures against him.

Swinderby then retired to Herefordshire, where proceedings were instituted against him by the bishop of the diocese, in 1391. Fox has given them at length from the registers of the bishop. They show that Swinderby taught the same doctrines as Wickliff, and was active in preaching the truth. One of the articles against him states, that "The same William, unmindful of his own salvation, hath many and often times come into a certain desert wood, called Dorvallwood,

and there, in a certain chapel not hallowed, or rather in a profane cottage, hath, in contempt of the keys,* presumed of his own rashness to celebrate, nay rather to profanate." He was also accused of similar "doings" elsewhere. Already had the poor Lollards resorted to village worship in private houses, then considered a crime worthy of death! This accusation was denied by Swinderby in his replies to the articles alleged against him, but rather on the ground of the facts being wrongly stated, than as admitting such conduct to be contrary to God's law. From the registers it appears that Swinderby being cited to appear again, absented himself, when he was excommunicated. He addressed a letter to the parliament, urging an examination into the errors and abuses then prevalent, but no particulars are recorded of the subsequent events of his life.

Walter Brute, or Britte, was a layman. He studied at Oxford, and graduated there. In 1360 he opposed the favourite tenet of the friars, that Christ obtained his livelihood by begging. He was of the diocese of Hereford, where he was accused of heresy in October, 1391. The tenets objected to him are those usually attributed to the Lollards. He was also accused as a favourer of Swinderby. His answers were clear and decisive as to his belief, that he approved Swinderby's answers, that real bread remained after the consecration of the sacrament, and that the pope was antichrist. He further presented some written declarations of the doctrines he held, which were entered in the bishop's register, and have been copied by Fox. They present an interesting record of his sentiments, extending to thirty folio pages. Some extracts will be found in the present volume.

It appears that Brute was a man of some consequence, from the pains taken by the Romanists to bring him to their views: they probably were more earnest on account of his descent from the ancient Britons. The proceedings lasted for two years, when after an examination of three days' continuance, before a number of prelates and other ecclesiastics, among whom was his late associate Nicholas Hereford, Brute made a submission in general terms, which, however, did not imply a recognition of the errors of the church of Rome. The register also contains a letter sent to Nicholas Hereford by some Lollard, faithfully rebuking his apostacy. Swinderby and Hereford were deemed of sufficient importance for royal proclamations to be issued, denouncing them by name. What became of Brute is not known. If he survived till the persecutions became more severe he probably perished in prison.

Many other disciples of Wickliff are enumerated by Lewis and Fox. Among them was Thomas Thorpe, whose examinations are an important document in the history of the

* Or ecclesiastical authority.

Reformation. They were written by himself, and printed by Tindal and Fox. They will be found in the present selection. The Acts and Monuments of Fox contain interesting particulars of many others of the faithful band who constituted the church of Christ in England, till the brighter days of the Reformation commenced. To insert the narratives here would make the present work a martyrology rather than a collection of the writings of the British Reformers. It is, however, much to be regretted that they are so little known, having been almost entirely unnoticed in the numerous imperfect extracts from Fox which have issued from the press. A correct reprint of that truly national work is most desirable.

The industry of the martyrologist has not left much for those who come after him, but in the present volume will be found the Lantern of Light, a piece to which he has only adverted by name, the contents of which will amply repay the perusal.

We have now to take a brief view of the course pursued to suppress the English Lollards.

Of this period, Milton well observes in his discourse of the Reformation in England. "When I recall to mind, how the bright and blissful Reformation, by divine power, strook through the black and settled night of ignorance and antichristian tyranny, after so many dark ages, wherein the huge overshadowing train of error had almost swept all the stars out of the firmament of the church, methinks a sovereign and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom of him that reads or hears; and the sweet odour of the returning gospel, imbathe his soul with the fragrancy of heaven. Then was the sacred BIBLE sought out of the dusty corners, where profane falsehood and neglect had thrown it; the schools opened; divine and human learning were raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues; the princes and cities came trooping apace to the newly erected banner of salvation; the martyrs, with the unresistable might of weakness, shaking the powers of darkness, and scorning the fiery rage of the old red dragon."

The doctrines of the truth were so widely diffused, at the time of Wickliff's decease, that the Romish ecclesiastics found prompt and decisive measures alone would preserve their power. To reformation they were utterly averse. As they would not relinquish their vices and errors, the only course was to establish their authority so fully, that whatever they chose to sanction or permit, should not be gainsaid. The dictates of the church of Rome were to be received as equal in authority to the faith builded on Christ, set forth in the scriptures; every opponent, therefore, of the papal doctrines, was to be treated as an infidel, and as an enemy to christianity.

Various measures were adopted to repress the obnoxious doctrines. As early as 1387, commissioners were appointed in many

parts of the kingdom, who were directed to search for and seize the books and tracts of Wickliff, Hereford, and Ashton, and to send them up to the council. All persons were forbidden to defend, maintain, or teach, openly or privately, the opinions set forth in those books; or to keep, copy, buy, or sell them, under pain of imprisonment and forfeiture of all their property. Many were apprehended in consequence of these measures, and compelled to abjure, or to suffer imprisonment, perhaps death. Knighton, however, expresses regret that these edicts were slowly and faintly executed. The numerous copies of portions of Wickliff's writings still extant, are evidences to confirm his statement as to the nonsuppression of the Reformer's writings, but the indisputable authority of the bishops' registers show that very active exertions were made against the Lollards.

The contest between the English government and the papal court was still kept alive by the encroachments of the latter. This encouraged the Lollards, or rather those who were the outward adherents of Wickliff, to make a bold attack upon the ecclesiastics. A parliament was held in 1394, at which they presented twelve articles of complaint. These chiefly attacked the power and profligacy of the clergy, but the more gross errors of popery were also adverted to. A variety of small satirical papers exposing these errors and vices, were actively circulated. The clergy were much alarmed at these open proceedings. They sent some of their number to the king, then in Ireland, who induced him to return without delay. He summoned Clifford, Latimer, Montague, and others, and by threats prevented them from giving encouragement to the Lollards. The pope was not wanting on such an occasion. He addressed a letter to the king and prelates; the latter were especially admonished that they must no longer be slothful, but must make strenuous efforts "to root out and destroy" their heretical opponents.

The clergy, in truth, did not deserve these reproaches. Courtney had been active in his proceedings, and Arundel, who succeeded to the primacy in 1396, followed his example. Immediately after his accession, he held a council at London, when eighteen conclusions taken from Wickliff's Trialogus were condemned. By order of the prelate, a friar named Woodford drew up a long reply to the opinions thus deduced from the writings of the Reformer.*

In the same year, a royal brief was directed to the university

* It is printed in the Fasciculus Rerum. The date at the conclusion is 1396, but some passages show that it was not completed till the commencement of the reign of Henry IV. Arundel's occupation of the see of Canterbury was interrupted, in consequence of his political intrigues, till the accession of Henry replaced him in power. He attributed his restoration to the especial interference of the virgin Mary in his behalf, and ordered new acts of worship to her honour!

of Oxford, directing the removal of all Lollards and others suspected of heretical pravity. The Trialogus of Wickliff was also to be examined, that the errors contained therein might be pointed out. In the following year, letters patent were issued, forbidding the university to plead any exemption to the prejudice of the royal authority, or in favour and support of Lollards and heretics. Some unwillingness to proceed against the followers of Wickliff probably had been evinced, for archbishop Arundel wrote to the chancellor that he was informed almost the whole university was touched with heretical pravity. To avert the dangers consequent upon such a charge, twelve delegates were appointed, who from fourteen of Wickliff's tracts selected three hundred conclusions as worthy of censure. These they sent to the archbishop and the convocation.

A darker hour was at hand, although the civil discords, which terminated in the dethronement and death of Richard II., checked the proceedings against the Lollards for a brief interval, and the accession of the son of John of Gaunt, their most zealous patron, excited hopes of protection. These, however, were speedily disappointed. Henry IV. was a usurper; he felt that he needed the support of the Romish clergy, and at once entered decisively into their views. In his first message to the convocation, October, 1399, he declared that he never would demand money from them except in the most urgent necessity: he also promised to protect their immunities, and to assist them in exterminating heretics. Arundel and the ecclesiastics lost no time in availing themselves of the royal disposition in their favour. In the next parliament a law was enacted, at the instance of the clergy, forbidding any one to preach without leave of his diocesan, and ordaining "that none should from thenceforth preach, hold, teach, or instruct, openly or privily, or make or write any book contrary to the catholic faith or determination of holy church, or make any conventicles or schools." All books of heresy were to be delivered up within forty days. Whoever offended was to be arrested by the diocesan, proceeded against according to the canons, to be kept in prison, and fined at the discretion of the diocesan. "If he refused to abjure, or relapsed, he was to be delivered to the sheriff or chief magistrate, to be BURNED ALIVE, in a conspicuous place, for the terror of others!"

Thus the liberties and immunities of the Romish clergy, or in other words, their errors, usurpations, and profligacies, were protected by a statute which constituted them sole judges in their own cause, and compelled the civil power to put to death any one whom they might denounce as differing from themselves in opinion! It is unnecessary to say that such measures evidently originated with the Romish clergy; in fact this law, though, as Fox observes, it "cost many a christian man his life," never was legally enacted—it was the act of the

king, the nobility, and the clergy, without the concurrence of the commons.

The ecclesiastics did not suffer this bloody law to remain an idle letter. During the session wherein it was enacted, William Sawtree, priest of St. Osyths, in London, was condemned for heresy, chiefly for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation, and refusing to worship the cross. He was burned alive in Smithfield, in February, 1401, and was the first of the noble band who sealed the truth with their blood, and rejoiced in the flames, in the metropolis of our land.

These cruel proceedings, with the activity used by Arundel against the doctrines of truth, by degrees repressed the outward manifestations of attachment to Wickliff or his opinions. Titled and distinguished leaders no longer appeared among the Lollards, but their sentiments were entertained in secret by great numbers in almost every part of England. In Fox's Acts and Monuments will be found details of numerous sufferers, taken from the bishops' own registers; and many documents reprinted at length by Wilkins, show both the cruelty and the superstition of the prelates of that day. While the Lollards were persecuted with unceasing severity, the Romish service-book was loaded with additional ceremonies and acts of worship to the virgin and saints.*

The principal measures which followed may be briefly noticed. In 1408, Constitutions were made by archbishop Arundel, forbidding any one to call in question what the church had determined; and again prohibiting the perusal of Wickliff's writings. Severe measures were taken to clear the university of Oxford from Lollards. It was also ordained, "that no one thereafter should, by his own authority, translate any text of holy scripture into English, or any other language, by way of a book, little book, or tract.† And that no such publication composed in the time of John Wickliff, or since, should be read, under pain of excommunication, until approved by the diocesan, or a provincial council."‡

* Among other documents may be mentioned a papal bull, in 1494, to inquire respecting miracles said to have been worked by Henry VI. with a view to his canonization! The expense, more than 1500 golden ducats, probably interfered with this design to make a saint of "the meek usurper." A manuscript in the British Museum contains a list of more than fifty miracles (so called) said to have been performed by Henry!

† It has long been the policy of the church of Rome to impede or prevent translations of the bible, while its own legends are freely circulated in many languages. The lying falsehoods respecting the chapel of Loretto are printed for the convenience of pilgrims; they are provided even in such languages as are not likely to be called for by many pilgrims—as, for instance, the Welsh!

‡ In these Constitutions of Arundel, the heretics were described as the tail of the black horse in the apocalypse!

In the preface to Arundel's Constitutions, the pope is said to carry the keys of eternal life and eternal death; and to be the vicegerent of the true God, to whom God had committed the government of the kingdom of heaven! At that time there were two popes, each of whom had denounced the other as a child of Satan, and shortly after both were deposed by the council of Pisa as heretics!

The desire to diminish the unnecessary wealth of the ecclesiastics was not extinguished. In 1409, it was represented to the king in parliament, that if the estates of the bishops, abbots, and priors, which they spent in unnecessary pomp and luxury, were taken away, the king might support from their revenues, 15 earls, 1500 knights, 6200 esquires, and 100 hospitals, in addition to those which then existed; leaving a further surplusage of £20,000 yearly to the king. Nor was this a vague computation. Various abbeys and other ecclesiastical endowments were enumerated, amounting to 322,000 marks yearly.* In addition to this large sum, other "houses of religion" possessed endowments sufficient to maintain 15,000 priests. Such a measure was not listened to at that time. When renewed at the commencement of the following reign, the prelates engaged Henry V. in war with France, to divert his attention from the subject. But the stone was loosened, and a hundred and twenty years after, this important measure respecting the ecclesiastical revenues was partly carried into effect.

In 1411, forty-five articles, attributed to Wickliff, were condemned at London by the prelates and doctors. The first of these was, that the substance of bread and wine remain in the sacrament of the altar.

Henry IV. died in 1413, and archbishop Arundel in the following year; but the proceedings against the Lollards were urged forward with still greater activity by Henry V. and primate Chichely. In 1415, enactments yet more severe were made. All officers at their admission were ordered to take an oath to destroy Lollardy. It has been observed, that "these wholesome severities," or "pious rigours," as they were called, show that the Romish clergy at this time ceased not to rage and roar after christian blood, like roaring lions. Whosoever did the fault, all horrible mischiefs whatsoever were imputed to the poor Lollards. Lord Cobham was one of the first victims of this reign.

Further active measures were directed in 1416, whereby inquisitors were appointed to search after persons suspected of heresy; also to inform against all who asserted heresies or errors, or had suspected books, or "who differed in life and manners from the common conversation of the faithful." What that conversation commonly was, is sufficiently shown, not only by the writings of Wickliff, but by the public documents and

* A mark was 13*s.* 4*d.*; equal to about £12 of our present money.

histories of the Romish church! AsLewis observes, "Now an inquisition was set up in every parish, and men were set at variance against their own fathers and mothers and nearest relations. So that often a man's greatest foes were those of his own household. Bishop Longland's registers, a century later, show sisters and brothers detecting their own brothers and sisters, the husband the wife, children their own father and mother, the parents their own sons and daughters, masters and servants accusing each other." In fact every bond of relative and social life was dissolved by these measures; general distrust became prevalent. Perhaps much of the proceedings during the civil wars of York and Lancaster, with the easy transfer of allegiance from "the meek Henry," enthralled by the priesthood, may be attributed to the deep felt abhorrence excited by these persecutions.

Lewis continues, "But though these barbarities, so reproachful to the christian name and religion, terrified men's minds, and forced them to great submission; yet they no way contributed to alter their judgments or settle their belief. Nay, it was very plain, that, though by authority or the secular arm, they were devoted to destruction, the Wickliffites were *oppressed* but not *extinguished.* Though it was made more than capital to have even a line of Wickliff's writings, there were those who had courage enough to preserve them, although for the crime of having them, some were burned alive with their little books. And, indeed, how little these cruelties served to convince men, very plainly appeared, when at the Reformation, about one hundred years after, these restraints were moderated or quite taken off. The whole nation, whatever their outward profession was before, unanimously, as it were, embraced these principles, and showed themselves very earnest in their defence. Although we are now unhappily fallen into an age that has lost its first love, and is so generally corrupted both in principle and practice, as to suffer the opposition then made to popish tyranny and superstition to be condemned, and the cruelties used to force men to approve of them, to be palliated and discredited."* The details of these cruelties will be found in the martyrologists.

In 1415, the council of Constance sat, when the articles prepared by the Oxford delegates were presented. Forty-four conclusions were drawn up, said to be found in Wickliff's writings, which were condemned as false, heretical, and erroneous. He was declared to have been an obstinate heretic. His bones were ordered to be dug up and cast upon a dunghill, if they could be separated from the bones of the faithful.

* Lewis' Life of Wickliff, ch. viii. These observations were written in 1719, but are in some respects applicable at the present day. The desire for the writings of the Reformers which has of late been evinced, is, however, an encouraging circumstance.

This sentence was not executed till 1428, when pope Martin V. sent renewed orders to Fleming, bishop of Lincoln, once a professed favourer of the reformer's doctrine! The bishop's officers accordingly took the mouldering remains from the grave, where they had quietly lain for more than forty years, and burned them! The ashes were cast into an adjoining rivulet called Swift. As Fuller beautifully observes, "This brook conveyed his ashes into the Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wickliff are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over."

Chicheley held the primacy till 1443. The extent of his scriptural knowledge appears from a decree, in which he speaks of the Lord's day as the seventh day of the week, on which God rested after the work of creation! Although he did not so much delight in the open execution of heretics as his predecessor, several martyrs were committed to the flames, and he was not less active in using other means of extermination. Some faint attempts at outward reformation were made, but these were scarcely more than nominal. A commission, of this nature, granted by archbishop Bourchier, in 1455, speaks of many of the clergy as ignorant and illiterate, profligate, negligent of their cures, while they strolled about the country with abandoned females, spending their revenues in luxury and debauchery. During this period the error of transubstantiation was farther established in England by the withholding of the cup from the laity. These documents, and others referred to in the present sketch, will be found in Wilkins's Concilia. On the accession of Edward IV., in 1462, he obtained the support of the clergy by granting them a charter of immunity, whereby all civil magistrates were forbidden to take any notice of treasons, murders, rapes, robberies, thefts, or other crimes committed by archbishops, bishops, priests, deacons, or any person in holy orders. What must have been the general character of a class of men who could desire, or even accept, such immunities? What would have been the reply of Wickliff and his associates, had such privileges been offered to them? Nor was this all; it was referred to the clergy at all times, to decide whether any person claiming exemption was of their number or not! Many purchased holy orders when accused of crimes they had committed, and thus escaped with impunity. The ruling ecclesiastics were, as might be supposed, lenient in the punishment of vice among the clergy, while the fate of bishop Pecock, and others, shows how little favour was extended to those who differed as to views of doctrine.

Edward IV. addressed letters to the university of Oxford, urging the suppression of Wickliff's and Pecock's doctrines. This letter, with the reply of the university, are among archbishop Parker's manuscripts in the library of Corpus Christi

College, Cambridge. The former is printed in the present collection.

Morton succeeded to the archbishopric of Canterbury in 1486. He called a synod for the reformation of the manners of the clergy, but his efforts were mostly directed against irregularities in dress—the preachers of the order of St. John were censured, but it was for reproving the vices of the clergy in their sermons! That there was occasion for them to do so is evident from a bull of Innocent VIII. in 1490, grievously complaining of the dissolute lives of the monastic orders in England. Morton's admonitory letter to the abbot of St. Alban's shows that the monks were most detestable miscreants. This primate, finding his journeys to London impeded by the ruinous state of Rochester bridge, granted remission of the punishment incurred for sins for a certain term, to all who assisted in repairing it! Still there were many in the land who bowed not to Baal, as appears from the records of martyrs suffering at the close of this century, and in the early years of the next.

During the unsettled state of affairs in the middle of the fifteenth century, we do not find that many had suffered publicly for the truth; as Fuller observes, "The very storm was their shelter, and the heat of these intestine commotions cooled the persecutions against them." Towards its close the scenes of persecution were renewed. The annals of martyrdom then become more full; they present numerous records of suffering.

The divine judgments might well be expected to fall heavily upon a land where evil so much abounded; where the doctrines of the truth had been so plainly set forth and rejected; and where the blood of the followers of Christ was so freely shed. Judgments came upon England. Famine, pestilence, and war, foreign and domestic, depopulated the country to a terrific extent. This is proved by parliamentary enactments, and the testimony of eye-witnesses to the ruined villages, uncultivated fields, and decayed towns. There is good reason to believe that the whole population of England and Scotland, at the termination of the civil wars of York and Lancaster, did not amount to three millions! Rich and powerful families experienced sudden reverses; those who had revelled at home in pomp and luxury, were seen begging their bread in foreign lands. We may easily suppose the misery of the lower classes, where neither person nor property were secure.* Yet such

* The civil power in the dark ages was unable to preserve public peace. This led to deadly feuds, and pretexts for plunder were easily found where sufficient power existed. The council of Clermont ordered that all violence should be suspended from sunset on Wednesday to sunrise on Monday, calling it the truce of God. Grateful, indeed, were the people at large for an enactment by which they passed so large a portion of the week in peace, instead of being in peril every hour. The scenes which took place on the other two days and nights of the week, may be better supposed than described.

times are described by Romish historians of the present day, with unblushing effrontery, as days of happiness in England, almost equalling the golden ages of poetic fiction! But it may be asked, wherein were they superior to preceding centuries or to those that have followed?—They were the reverse, as appears from the public documents of the Romish ecclesiastics themselves, which have been preserved. We know from divine authority that the poor will never cease from out of the land; in the mysterious but wise dispensations of providence, much outward suffering will exist at all times in this world of sin and sorrow, and true history never yet has recorded a people as prosperous or happy, when sinning as a nation against the Most High, or when suffering under divine judgments deservedly sent upon their country.

In the following pages will be found some pieces relative to the Lollards, and the proceedings of their oppressors during the fifteenth century. Among the most valuable are the history of lord Cobham and the examinations of Thorpe. The Lantern of Light will also be read with interest, as a production of the immediate followers of the Reformer. Other pieces in this volume carry us to that period when the light of the German reformation shone upon the plants which had sprung up from the seeds so widely sown by Wickliff.

Meanwhile, as in former ages, the operations of divine grace were not limited to any one class of men. Although the Lollards were the main instruments of diffusing the truth, and of preparing the way for the English Reformation of the sixteenth century, there were some, even within the Romish church in England, who loved the Saviour, and looked to him alone for salvation; and others who opposed the cruel persecutions urged forward by their associates.

A brief specimen of the first of these will be found in the extract from the writings of Walter Hilton, a monk who lived soon after Wickliff. Of the latter class was bishop Pecock, whose melancholy history shows us one of those who allow their prejudices or connexions to lead them to oppose and keep aloof from the real followers of Christ, on account of outward differences, while they are inwardly convinced of the religious truths they maintain, and, there is ground to hope, partakers of like precious faith.

Another and still more valuable character, connected with the church of Rome, but in reality a forerunner of the Reformation, was Dr. John Colet; a narrative respecting him is given by Fox, with which this sketch of the disciples of Wickliff and the precursors of the British Reformers may be concluded.

"About this time, A.D. 1519, died doctor John Colet; to whose sermons the known men (or Lollards) about Buckinghamshire,

had great mind to resort. After he came from Italy and Paris, he first began to read the epistles of St. Paul openly in Oxford, instead of Scotus and Thomas Aquinas. From thence he was called by the king and made dean of Paul's; where he preached much to great auditories of the king's court, the citizens, and others. His diet was frugal, his life upright, in discipline he was severe. So that his canons, because of their straiter rule, complained that they were made like monks. The honest and honourable state of matrimony he ever preferred before the unchaste singleness of priests. At his dinner, commonly was read either some chapter of St. Paul, or of Solomon's Proverbs. He never used to sup. And although the blindness of that time carried him away after the common errors of popery, yet in ripeness of judgment he seemed to incline from the common manner of that age. The orders of monks and friars he fancied not. Neither could he greatly favour the barbarous divinity of the school doctors, as of Scotus, but least of all of Thomas Aquinas. Insomuch that when Erasmus, speaking in praise of Thomas Aquinas, commended him that he had read many old authors, and had written many new works, to prove and to know his judgment, Colet, supposing that Erasmus meant good faith, burst out in great vehemence, saying, 'What tell you me of the commendation of that man, who except he had been of an arrogant and presumptuous spirit, would not define and discuss all things so boldly and rashly; and also except he had been rather worldly minded than heavenly, would never have so polluted Christ's whole doctrine with man's profane doctrine, in such sort as he hath done.'

"The bishop of London at that time was Fitzjames, aged no less than eighty; who, bearing long grudge and displeasure against Colet, with other two bishops taking his part, like to himself, complained against Colet to archbishop Warham. The complaint was divided into three articles. The first was for speaking against worshipping of images. The second was about hospitality, for that he in treating upon the place of the gospel, 'Feed, feed, feed,' John xxi. when he had expounded the two first, for feeding with example of life and with doctrine, in the third, which the schoolmen expound for feeding with hospitality, he left out the outward feeding of the belly, and applied it another way. The third crime wherewith they charged him, was for speaking against such as used to preach only by bosom sermons,* declaring nothing else to the people, but as they bring in their papers with them. Which, because the bishop of London then used much to do, for his age, he took it as spoken against him, and therefore bare him this displeasure. The archbishop, more wisely weighing the matter, and being well acquainted with Colet, so took his part against his accusers, that he at that time was rid out of trouble.

* Written sermons, carried about in the bosoms of the preachers.

"William Tindal, in his book answering master More, testifies that the bishop of London would have made dean Colet a heretic for translating the Paternoster into English, had not the archbishop of Canterbury holpen the dean!

"But yet the malice of bishop Fitzjames ceased not; he practised how to accuse Colet unto the king. The king (Henry VIII.) was preparing for war against France. Whereupon the bishop, with his coadjutors, taking occasion upon certain words of Colet, wherein he seemed to prefer peace before any kind of war, were it ever so just, accused him therefore. And upon Good Friday, Dr. Colet, preaching before the king, treated of the victory of Christ, exhorting all christians to fight, under the standard of Christ, against the devil; adding moreover what a hard thing it was to fight under Christ's banner, and that all they who upon private hatred or ambition took weapon against their enemy one christian to slay another, such did not fight under the banner of Christ, but rather of Satan; and therefore concluding his matter, he exhorted that christian men in their wars would follow Christ their Prince and Captain, in fighting against their enemies, rather than the example of Julius or Alexander, &c. The king, fearing lest by his words the hearts of his soldiers might be withdrawn from his war, took Colet, and talked with him alone in his garden walking. His enemies thought now that Colet must be committed to the Tower, and waited for his coming out. But the king with great gentleness entertaining Dr. Colet, bidding him familiarly to put on his cap, in long courteous talk much commended his learning and integrity of life, agreeing with him in all points, only he required him, for that the rude soldiers should not rashly mistake that which he had said, more plainly to explain his words and mind in that behalf, which after he did; and so after long communication and great promises, the king dismissed Colet with these words, saying, 'Let every man have his doctor as him liketh; this shall be my doctor,' and so departed. Whereby none of his adversaries durst ever trouble him after that time.

"Among many other memorable acts left behind him, he erected a worthy foundation of the school of Paul's; I pray God the fruits of the school may answer the foundation, for the cherishing of youth in good letters. He provided a sufficient stipend as well for the master as for the usher, whom he willed rather to be appointed out of the number of married men, than of single priests with their suspected chastity. The first master of the school was William Lily."

Dr. Colet was born in London, A. D. 1466. He was of Magdalen-college, Oxford, and held various ecclesiastical preferments, but his wealth was chiefly patrimonial. Some of his writings have been preserved; the principal is a faithful sermon preached before the convocation in 1511.

DECLARATIONS

OF

WALTER BRUTE.

A. D. 1391.

The examinations of Walter Brute, or Britte, extend to considerable length. Fox has printed them in his Acts and Monuments, from the registers of the bishop of Hereford. They exhibit the accusations of his enemies, and his written replies. These accusations principally consist of allegations that he opposed the power and usurpations of the Romish ecclesiastics, he also preached from holy scripture, he exposed the errors of transubstantiation, and taught that the pope's pardons and other devices of the ecclesiastics could not profit for the salvation of souls. The greater part of Brute's answers relate to points which now would little interest the reader, but some extracts may be given that refer to the more important doctrines taught by Wickliff and his followers. After recording the accusations, and stating the substance of some verbal communications with the accused, which statements contain numerous misrepresentations, the register proceeds.

"At the last, Walter Brute did present and cause to be presented to us, at divers places and times assigned by us to the same Walter, to answer to the former conclusions and articles, divers scrolls of paper, written with his own proper hand, for his answers to the same articles and conclusions above written; he partly appearing by his own self before us sitting in our judgment seat, and partly by his messengers, specially appointed to that purpose; of which scrolls, the tenour does follow in order, word by word, on this manner.

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. I Walter Brute, sinner, layman, husbandman, and a christian of the Britons, having my offspring of the Britons, both by my father's and mother's side,*

* An instance of the strong national feeling which even to that day existed amongst the Britons, appears in one passage of Brute's declarations. He says, that from scriptures, (which he quotes,) it appears most probable to him, that "Antichrist shall be destroyed by the most mighty persons of the Gentiles, through the sword of the word of God." He then states, that amongst the Gentiles there have been none more strong than the Britons, either in body or in faith, and refers to history in proof of the first; that they were never

have been accused to the bishop of Hereford, that I did err in many matters concerning the catholic christian faith; by whom I am required that I should write an answer in Latin to all those matters. Whose desire I will satisfy to my power, protesting first of all, before God and before all the world, that like as it is not my mind, through God's grace, to refuse the known truth, for any reward greater or smaller, yea, be it ever so big, nor yet for the fear of any temporal punishment; even so it is not my mind to maintain any erroneous doctrine for any commodity's sake. And if any man, of what state, sect, or condition soever he be, will show me by the authority of the sacred scripture, or by probable reason grounded in the sacred scripture, that I err in my writings or sayings, I will humbly and gladly receive his information. But, as for the bare words of any teacher, Christ only excepted, I will not simply believe, except he shall be able to establish them by the truth of experience, or of the scripture. Because that, in the holy apostles elected by Christ, there hath been found error by the testimony of the holy scripture; because that Paul himself doth confess that he rebuked Peter, for that he was worthy to be rebuked, Galatians, the 2d chapter. There have been errors found in the holy doctors, that have been before us, as they themselves confess of themselves. And oftentimes it falleth out, that there is error found in the teachers in our age; who are of contrary opinions among themselves, and some of them sometimes determine one thing for truth, and others condemn the self-same thing to be heresy and error. Which protestation premised, I will here place two suppositions or cases for a ground, and a foundation of all things that I shall say, out of which I would gather two probable conclusions established upon the same, and upon the sacred scripture. By which conclusions, when they shall be declared, it shall plainly appear what my opinion and judgment is concerning all matters that I am accused of. But, because I am ignorant and unlearned, I will get me under the mighty defences of the Lord: O Lord, I will remember thine only righteousness.

overcome but by their own sedition, or treason, or when weakened by pestilence and famine. And that "by no tribulation could they be compelled to forsake the faith." (See History of the Church of Christ, vol. iii. p. 52, et seq.) He adds, "By these things it may plainly appear, why at this time, rather than in time past, this matter is stirred up; and why in this kingdom, rather than in other kingdoms, the calling of the Gentiles is treated of, to the verifying of the gospel, through the disclosing of antichrist."

"I. God the Father almighty uncreate, the Maker of heaven and earth, hath sent his Son, that was everlastingly begotten, into this world, that he should be incarnated for the salvation and redemption of mankind—who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, everlastingly proceeding from the Father and the Son, and was born of Mary the virgin, to the end that we might be born anew. He suffered passion under Pontius Pilate for our sins, laying down his life for us, that we should lay down our life for our brethren. He was crucified, that we should be crucified to the world, and the world to us. He was dead, that he might redeem us from death, by purchasing for us forgiveness of sins. He was buried, that we, being buried together with him into death by baptism, and that we being dead to sins, should live to righteousness. He descended into hell, thereby delivering man from thraldom, and from the bondage of the devil, and restoring him to his inheritance, which he lost by sin. The third day he rose from the dead, through the glory of his Father, that we also should walk in newness of life. He ascended up to the heavens, to which nobody hath ascended, saving he that descended from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. He sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty, until his enemies are made his footstool; he, being in very deed so much better than the angels, as he hath obtained by inheritance a more excellent name than they. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead, according to their works, because the Father hath given all judgment to the Son. In whose terrible judgment we shall rise again, and shall all of us stand before his judgment seat, and receive joy, as well bodily as spiritually, for ever to endure, if we are of the sheep placed at the right hand; or else punishment both of body and soul, if we shall be found amongst goats, placed on the left hand, &c.

"II. Jesus Christ the Son of God, very God and very man, a king for ever, by establishing an everlasting kingdom, breaking to powder all the kingdoms of the world, Daniel ii. a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, whereby also he is able evermore to save such as by him come unto God, and always liveth to entreat for us, Heb. vii. He, offering one sacrifice for our sins, hath made perfect for ever by one oblation those that be sanctified, Heb. x. Being the Wisdom that cannot be deceived, and the Truth that cannot be uttered, he hath in this world taught the will of the Godhead

of his Father, which will he hath in work fulfilled, to the intent that he might faithfully instruct us; and hath given the law of charity to be observed by his faithful people, which he hath written in the hearts and minds of the faithful, with the finger of God, where is the Spirit of God, searching the inward secrets of the Godhead. Wherefore his doctrine must be observed above all other doctrines, whether of angels or of men, because that he could not or would not err in his teaching. But in men's doctrine there oftentimes is error; and therefore we must forsake their doctrines, if cloakedly or expressly they are repugnant to the doctrine of Christ. Men's doctrines being made for the people's profit must be allowed and observed, so that they are grounded on Christ's doctrine, or at least not repugnant to his words."

Brute then proceeds at considerable length to argue that "If the high bishop of Rome, calling himself the servant of the servants of God, and the chief vicar of Christ in this world, does make and maintain many laws contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ, then is he of those that have come in Christ's name, saying, I am Christ, and have seduced many a one, as appears by the testimony of our Saviour, Matt. xxiv. and he is the idol of desolation sitting in the temple of God." He then cites many passages of scripture that refer to antichrist, and describe the spiritual Babylon, which latter he says is the city of Rome, if she allow the traditions of antichrist, and disallow Christ's holy commandments and Christ's doctrine.

The bishop of Hereford objected to this writing as too short and obscure, and required Brute to write more plainly and at large. He complied, prefacing as follows.

"Reverend father, forsomuch as it seemeth to you that my motion in my two suppositions or cases, and in my two conclusions, is too short and somewhat dark; I will gladly now satisfy your desire, according to my small learning, by declaring the same conclusions. In opening whereof, it shall plainly appear, what I do judge in all matters that I am accused of to your reverence; desiring you first of all, that your discretion would not believe that I do enterprize of any presumption to handle the secrets of the scriptures, which the holy, and just, and wise doctors have left unexpounded. It is not unknown to many, that I am in all points far inferior to them, whose holiness of life and profoundness in knowledge is manifold ways allowed. But

as for mine ignorance, and multitude of sins, they are to myself and others sufficiently known; wherefore I judge not myself worthy to unloose or to carry their shoes after them. Do you therefore no otherwise deem of me, than I do of mine own self. But if you shall find any goodness in my writings, ascribe it to God only; who according to the multitude of his mercy doth sometimes reveal those things to idiots and sinners, which are hidden from the holy and wise, according to this saying: I will praise and confess thee, O Father, for that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast disclosed them to the little ones. Even so, O Father, because it hath thus pleased thee. And in another place; I am come to judgment in this world, that they which see not, may see, and that they which see, may be made blind. And Paul saith, that God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the mighty, that no man shall boast in himself, but that all men should give the honour to God."

Brute then quotes various passages of the bible. He brings them forward with much caution, refuting the things that have been "applied unfitly to the imagined antichrist, and not truly grounded upon the scripture." He enters into various explanations and calculations deduced from the periods mentioned in prophecy, and points out the pope, as proving by his conduct, that his laws are opposed to the gospel of Christ, and therefore he is antichrist. These arguments Brute enforces, by showing that the law of Christ is charity, which is the perfect love of God and Christ, and quoting the words of our Lord. "Christ being demanded of a certain doctor of the law, What is the greatest commandment in the law? answered, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. That is the principal and greatest commandment. And as for the second it is like unto this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thine own self. In these two commandments, doth the whole law and the prophets depend. Also the words of our Lord, John vii. xiii. and xv. All manner of things therefore that ye would that men should do to you, the same also do you unto them. For this is the law and the prophets.—And, Now do I say unto you, I give you a new commandment, that you should love each other; as I loved you, in like manner that you also should love one another. In this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you shall have love one towards another.—And,

This is my commandment, that you love together as I have loved you. Greater love than this hath no one, that a man should give his life for his friends." Brute also quotes 1 Peter iv. 8—11. James ii. 8, 9. 12. 14, 15. 17. 1 John iii. 11. 14. 16. 18. iv. 7—12. 19—21. Rom. xiii. 8—10. 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3. Gal. v. 13, 14. Eph. iv. 1—3. v. 1, 2. Phil. i. 27. 30. ii. 1—4. Col. iii. 12—16. 1 Thess. iv. 9, 10. Having thus firmly grounded his arguments on scripture, Brute proceeds thus,

"Out of all these and many other places of the holy scripture it sufficiently appears, that the law of Christ is charity; neither is there any virtue commanded of Christ, or any of his apostles, to be observed of the faithful people, but it cometh out of charity, or else doth nourish charity.

"The law is given by Moses, and the truth by Christ. Christ came not to unloose the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them. But yet many things were lawful, and might have been observed in the time of the law, which in the time of grace must not be observed. And many things were unlawful to them that were under the law, which in the time of grace are lawful enough. After what sort then he did not loose the law, but did fulfil it, it is necessary to declare, for those things which hereafter must be said. For amongst christians many things are judged to be lawful, because in the former testament in the law they were lawful; and yet they are expressly contrary to Christ's gospel. But the authors of such things argue and reason thus; Christ came not to loose the law or the prophets. Now after what sort he did not unloose them, it is manifest by the holy scripture. The law given by Moses, was written on tables of stone, to declare the hardness of the people's heart towards the love of God, or of Christ. But Christ hath written his law in the hearts and in the minds of his, that is to say, the law of perfect love of God, and of Christ. Which law whosoever observeth, he doth observe the law of Moses, and doth much greater works of perfection, than were the works of the law. Thus therefore were the morals of the old law fulfilled in the law of charity of Christ, and not unloosed; because they are much more perfectly observed, than by the Jews. This I say, if the christians do observe the commandments of Christ in such sort, as he commanded the same to be observed. Christ hath fulfilled the laws moral of the old testament, because that the morals and judicials were ordained, that one

person should not do injury to another, and that every man should have that which is his paid him. Now they that are in charity, will do no injury to others, neither do they take other men's goods away from them. Nay, it seeketh not her own things. For charity seeketh not the things that are her own. Wherefore, by a stronger reason, much less ought it to seek for other men's goods. And when as the judicials and morals were ordained, Christ did not by the works of the law justify the believers in him, but by grace justified them from their sins. And so did Christ fulfil that by grace which the law could not by justice.

" Paul to the Romans declares in a godly discourse, and to the Galatians likewise, that none shall be justified by the works of the law, but by grace in the faith of Jesus Christ. As for the morals and ceremonies of the law, as circumcision, sacrifices for offences, and for sins, first fruits, tenths, vows, divers sorts of washings, the sprinkling of blood, the sprinkling of ashes, abstaining from unclean meats, which are ordained for the sanctifying and cleansing of the people from sin, no nor yet the prayers of the priests, neither the preachings of the prophets, could cleanse a man from his sin. For death reigned even from Adam to Moses, and sin from Moses to Christ, as Paul declares to the Romans in the fifth chapter. But Christ willing to have mercy and not sacrifice, being a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, and a High-Priest of good things to come, did neither by the blood of goats, or calves, but by his own blood, enter in once into the holy places, when as everlasting redemption was found. Neither did Jesus enter into the holy places that were made with hands, which are the examples of true things, but unto the very heaven, that now he may appear before the countenance of God for us. Nor yet did he so, that he should offer up himself oftentimes, as the high-priest entered into the holy place every year with strange blood; for otherwise he must needs have suffered oftentimes since the beginning of the world; but now in the latter end of the world hath he once appeared, by his own sacrifice, for the destruction of sin. And like as it is decreed for men once to die, and after that cometh judgment, even so was Christ once offered up to consume away the sins of many. The second time shall he appear without sin to the salvation of such as look for him. For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image or substance itself of the things, can never

by those sacrifices which they offer, of one selfsame sort continually year by year, make them perfect that come unto it. Otherwise men would leave off offering, because that those worshippers being once cleansed, should have no more pain of conscience for sin afterwards. But in them there is remembrance made of sins every year. For it is impossible that by the blood of goats and bulls sins should be taken away. Wherefore, he, entering into the world, doth say, As for sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not have, but a body hast thou framed unto me. And sacrifices for sin have not pleased thee. Then said I, Behold, I come; in the head, or principal part, of the book it is written of me, that I should do thy will, O God. Wherefore he said before, that sacrifices, oblations, and burnt offerings for sin thou wouldest not have; neither were those things pleasant to thee which are offered according to the law; then said I, Behold, I come, that I may do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish that which followed. In which will we are sanctified and made holy, by the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once. And verily, every priest is ready every day ministering, and oftentimes offering the selfsame sacrifices, which never can take away sins. But this man, offering one sacrifice for sins, doth for ever and ever sit at God's right hand, looking for the rest to come, till that his enemies are placed to be his footstool. For with one offering hath he for ever made perfect those that be sanctified. By which things it plainly appeareth, that Christ by one offering hath cleansed his from their sins; who could not be cleansed from the same by all the ceremonies of the law, and so did fulfil that which the priesthood of the law could not. Wherefore, only the morals and judicials he fulfilled by the law of charity, and by grace; and the ceremonials, by one offering up of his body on the altar of the cross. And so it is plain that Christ fulfilled the whole law."

Brute then refers to the accusation against him, that he had said "tithes were mere alms, and in case the curates shall be evil, they may be lawfully bestowed upon others by the temporal owners." It has been already stated that on this subject much was objected against Wickliff and his followers; it need not be here noticed farther than to say that Brute urged, that if priests claimed tithes under the authority of the Mosaic law, they were bound to

conform to the law of Moses in not having possessions and lordships among their brethren. As Fox notes in the margin, "He proves not to the contrary, but that tithes are due by the profitable law of man; although not by the ceremonial law of Moses." Beyond this few will wish to go at the present day.

Brute soon leaves this subject; he then treats largely of the patience and long suffering of Christ, and the example therein left us to follow, not taking away the lawfulness of wars in case of necessity, but asking, "How can a man say that they may lawfully make war and kill their brethren for the temporal goods which peradventure they unjustly occupy, or unjustly intend to occupy?" He adds, "If he go forward without charity to make war, then doth he evil, and to his own damnation." This brings him to a subject then of considerable importance, the wars or crusades stirred up by the popes against infidels, or against the followers of the truth who opposed their mandates. Brute condemns them in strong terms. We may here again observe the marginal annotations of Fox. "This proposition of Walter Brute concerning the war of christians not to be lawful, is not to be taken universally, but in particular case as he meaneth, which is this, That such wars, allowed of the pope, not for the necessary defence of public peace, liberty, and the safeguard of our countries, or against public injuries offered, but only to go and kill the infidels, because they believe not, having no other cause, those wars of the pope he liketh not."

Brute then proceeds to declare the doctrine of christian mercy. By this rule the pope and his clergy are tried, and again found wanting. He here evidently speaks not of temporal crimes, but of what were called spiritual offences or "causes of religion, which the pope and his prelates are wont to punish with death, taking many times for tares that which indeed is pure wheat." (Fox, margin.) He says,

"It is manifest, that Christ will have mercy showed unto sinners, even unto the end of the world, and will have them to remain mingled with the good. Lest peradventure when a man thinketh that he doth right well to take away the tares, he take away the wheat. For how great a sinner soever a man be, we know not but that his end shall be good, and that in the end he shall obtain mercy of God. Neither are we certain of the time, wherein God will, by grace, judge him whom we abhor as a sinner. And peradventure such a one shall more profit after his conversion

in the church, than he whom we think to be just; as it came to pass in Paul. And if God justifieth a man by grace, although at his end, why darest thou be so bold to be his judge, and to condemn him? Yea, rather, although a man seem to be obstinate and hardened in his evil, so that he is not corrected by a secret correction, correct him before one alone; if he do not receive open correction being done before two or three witnesses, neither passeth upon a manifest correction when his sin is made known unto the church, even then Christ doth not teach to punish such a one with the punishment of death. Yea, rather he saith, If he hearken not unto the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen and a publican."

After quoting the advice of St. Paul, 1 Cor. v. Brute says,

"Wherefore they do ill understand Paul, who by this saying do confirm the killing of men. And forsomuch as heresy is one of the most grievous sins, for a heretic leadeth men in errors, whereby they are made to stray from faith, without which they cannot be saved, it doth most great hurt in the church."

Brute then shows that the example of Peter in the case of Ananias and Sapphira is wrongly applied by the papists, reminding them also that Peter did not kill Ananias and his wife, nor command them to be put to death, but that it proceeded of God. This he enforces by reference to the conduct of Peter in the case of Simon Magus.

Brute next proceeds to show how falsely the pope's usurped power is founded upon the scriptures,—that Christ only is the Head of the church; and that other apostles had like power with Peter. This brings him to consider the popish doctrine of absolution. Here he says,

"As concerning the judicial authority of the clergy, many things are written thereof in the canons of decrees, greatly to be marvelled at, and far from the truth of the scripture. The authors of the canons say, That Christ gave unto the priests judicial power over sinners that confess their sins unto them. And this they ground upon the text of Christ; I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou loosest, &c. Matt. xvi. 19. And these keys of the kingdom of heaven, they call the knowledge to discern, and the power to judge, which they say only belongeth to the priests, except in case of necessity; then they say a layman

may absolve a man from sin. And, as touching absolution, they say there are three things to be required on the sinners' part; first, hearty contrition, whereby the sinners ought to bewail their offending of God through sins; the second is, auricular confession, whereby the sinner ought to show unto the priest his sins, and the circumstances of them; the third is satisfaction through penance enjoined unto him by the priest for his sins committed. And of his part that giveth absolution there are two things, say they, to be required; that is to say, knowledge to discern one sin from another, whereby he ought to make a difference of sins, and appoint a convenient penance, according to the quantity of the sins. The second is authority to judge, whereby he ought to enjoin penance to the offender. And further they say, that he who is confessed ought with all humility to submit himself to this authority, and wholly and voluntarily to do those penances which are commanded him by the priest, except the said penance be released by a superior power; for all priests, as they say, have not equal authority to absolve sins. The chief priest, whom they call Peter's successor, hath power fully and wholly to absolve. But the inferior priests have power, some more, some less. The more as they are near him in dignity, the less as they are farther from the degree of his dignity.

"All this is declared by process in the decrees, (Decret de pœnitentia) but not by the express doctrine of Christ, or any of his apostles. For, although Christ absolved men from their sins, I do not find that he did it after the manner of a judge, but of a Saviour. For Christ saith, God sent not his Son into the world to judge sinners, but that the world should be saved by him, John iii. Whereupon he spake unto him whom he healed of the palsy, Behold thou art made whole, go thy ways and sin no more. And, to the woman taken in adultery Christ said, Woman, where be thy accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. To whom then Jesus thus said, No more will I condemn thee; go now and sin no more.

"By which words and deeds of Christ, and many other places of the scripture, it appeareth, he was not as a judge at his first coming, to punish sinners according to the quantity of their offences; but that day shall come hereafter, wherein he shall judge all men according to their works, as in Matt. xxv. where he saith, When the Son of man shall come in his majesty, and all his angels with him; then

shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty, and all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats," &c.

Brute then disproves the popish doctrine that children dying unbaptized shall be tormented with eternal fire, and proceeds to consider the things which the canons of decrees affirm to be requisite for the remission of sins of those that sin after baptism. First auricular confession; his examination of this point is perhaps the most able that we have upon the subject among the writings of the Reformers.

"I cannot find in any place in the gospel, where Christ commanded that this kind of confession should be done unto the priest; nor can I find that Christ assigned any penance unto sinners for their sins, but that he willed them to sin no more. If a sinner confess that he hath offended God through sin, and sorroweth heartily for his offences, minding hereafter no more to sin; then is he truly repentant for his sin, and then he is converted unto the Lord. If he shall then, humbly and with good hope, crave mercy at God and remission of his sins, what is he that can hinder God to absolve that sinner from his sin? And as God absolveth a sinner from his sin, so hath Christ absolved many, although they confessed not their sins unto the priests, and although they received not due penance for their sins. And if Christ could after that manner once absolve sinners, how is he become now not able to absolve? Except some man will say that he is above Christ, and that his power is diminished by the ordinances of his own laws. How were sinners absolved of God in the time of the apostles, and always heretofore, unto the time that these canons were made? I speak not these things as though confession to priests were wicked; but that it is not of necessity requisite unto salvation I believe verily that the confession of sins unto good priests, and likewise to other faithful christians, is good, as witnesseth St. James the apostle: Confess ye yourselves one to another, and pray ye one for another, that ye may be saved: for the continual prayer of the just availeth much. Elias was a man that suffered many things like unto you, and he prayed that it should not rain upon the earth, and it rained not in three years and six months. And again he prayed, and it rained from heaven, and the earth yielded forth her fruit. This kind of confession is

good, profitable, and expedient. For if God peradventure heareth not a man's own prayer, he is helped with the intercession of others. Yet nevertheless the prayers of the priests seem too much to be extolled in the decrees, where it treateth of penitence, and that saying is ascribed unto pope Leo, (Cap. multiplex misericordia Dei, &c.). And it followeth, 'So is it ordained by the providence of God's divine will, that the mercy of God cannot be obtained but by the prayer of the priests,' &c. The prayer of a good priest doth much avail a sinner, confessing his faults unto him. The counsel of a discreet priest is very profitable for a sinner, to give the sinner counsel to beware hereafter to sin, and to instruct him how he shall punish his body by fasting, by watching, and such like acts of repentance, that hereafter he may be better preserved from sin.

"After this manner I esteem confession to priests very expedient and profitable to a sinner. But to confess sins unto the priest, as unto a judge, and to receive of him corporal penance for a satisfaction unto God for his sins committed; I see not how this can be founded upon the truth of the scripture. For, before the coming of Christ, no man was sufficient, or able to make satisfaction unto God for his sins, although he suffered ever so much penance for his sins. And therefore it was needful that He who was without sin, should be punished for sins, as witnesseth Isaiah, chap. liii. where he saith, He took our griefs upon him, and our sorrows he bare. And again, He was wounded for our iniquities, and vexed for our wickedness. And again, The Lord put upon him our iniquity. And again, For the wickedness of my people have I stricken him. If therefore Christ through his passion hath made satisfaction for our sins, whereas we ourselves were unable to do it; then, through him have we grace and remission of sins. How can we say now, that we are sufficient to make satisfaction unto God by any penance enjoined unto us by man's authority, seeing that our sins are more grievous after baptism, than they were before the coming of Christ? Therefore, as in baptism the pain of Christ in his passion was a full satisfaction for our sins, even so is it after baptism, if we confess that we have offended, and are heartily sorry for our sins, and minded not to sin again afterwards.

"Hereupon John writeth in his first epistle, chap. i. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and

just, he will remit them, and cleanse us from all our iniquities. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My well beloved children, this I write unto you that ye sin not; but if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. Therefore we ought to confess ourselves chiefly unto God, even from the heart, for that he chiefly doth remit sins; without whose absolution little availeth the absolution of man. This kind of confession is profitable and good. The authors of the canons say, that although auricular confession made unto the priest, be not expressly taught by Christ, yet, say they, it is taught in that saying which Christ said unto the diseased of the leprosy, whom he commanded, Go your ways and show yourselves unto the priests, because as they say, the law of cleansing lepers, which was given by Moses, signified the confession of sins unto the priest. And whereas Christ commanded the lepers to show themselves unto the priests, they say, that Christ meant, that those who were unclean with the leprosy of sin, should show their sins unto the priests by auricular confession. I marvel much at the authors of the canons; for even from the beginning of their decrees unto the end, they ground their sayings upon the old law, which was the law of sin and death, and not, as witnesseth Paul, upon the words of Christ, which are spirit and life. Christ saith, The words which I speak unto you, are the spirit and life. They ground their sayings in the shadow of the law, and not in the light of Christ; for every evil doer hateth the light, and cometh not into it, that his deeds be not reproved; but he that doth the truth cometh into the light, that his works may be openly seen, because they are done in God, John iii.

"Now let us pass to the words that Christ spake to the leper, who said, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus stretching forth his hand touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean: and straightway he was cleansed of his leprosy. And Jesus said unto him, See thou tell no man, but go and show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a witness of these things. This gospel witnesses plainly, that the diseased of the leprosy were cleansed only by Christ, and not by the priests, neither did Christ command the leper to show himself unto the priests, for any help of cleansing that he should receive of

the priests, but to fulfil the law of Moses in offering a sacrifice for his cleansing, and for a testimony unto the priests, who always of envy accused Christ as a transgressor of the law. For if Christ, after he had cleansed the leper, had licensed him to communicate with others that were clean, before he had showed himself cleansed unto the priests, then might the priests have accused Christ as a transgressor of the law; because it was a precept of the law, that the leper after he was cleansed, should show himself unto the priests. And they had signs in the book of the law, whereby they might judge whether he were truly cleansed or not. If he were cleansed, then would the priests offer a gift for his cleansing; and if he were not cleansed, then would they segregate* him from the company of others that were clean.

"Seeing every figure ought to be assimuled† unto the thing that is figured; I pray you then what agreement is there between the cleansing of lepers by the law, and the confession of sins? By that law the priest knew better whether he were leprous than he himself that had the leprosy. In confession, the priest knows not the sins of him that was confessed, but by his own confession. In that law the priest did not cleanse the leprous. How therefore ought the priests now to cleanse sinners from their sin, and to say that without them they cannot be cleansed? In that law the priest had certain signs, by the which he could certainly know whether a man were cleansed from his leprosy or not. In confession, the priest is not certain of the cleansing of sins, because he is ignorant of his contrition. He knoweth not also whether he wills not to sin any more; without the which contrition and granting to sin no more, God hath not absolved any sinner. And if God hath not absolved a man, without doubt then is he not made clean. And how then is confession figured under that law? Doubtless so it seems to me, under the correction of them that can judge better in the matter, that this law bears rather a figure of excommunication, and reconciliation of him that hath been obstinate in his sin, and is reconciled again. For so it appears by the process of the gospel, that when the sinner doth not amend for the private correction of his brother, nor for the correction of two or three, neither yet for the public correction of the whole church; then is he to be counted as a heathen and a publican, and as a certain (or confirmed) leper, to be avoided out of the company of all men. Which

* Separate. † Like, made similar.

sinner, notwithstanding, if he shall yet repent, is then to be reconciled, because he is then cleansed from his obstinacy.

"But he which pretends himself to be the chief vicar of Christ, and the high priest, saith that he hath power to absolve *à pœna* and *à culpa*.* Which I do not find how it is founded in the scripture; but that of his own authority he enjoins to sinners penance for their sins. And grant that from their sins he may well absolve them, yet from the pain which they call *à pœna*, he does not simply absolve, as in his indulgences he promises. But if he were in charity, and had such power as he pretendeth, he would suffer none to lie in purgatory for sin, forsomuch as that pain far exceeds all other pain which we suffer here. What man is there, being in charity, but if he see his brother to be tormented in this world, if he may, he will help him and deliver him? Much more ought the pope then to deliver out of pains of purgatory, indifferently as well rich as poor.† And if he sell to the rich his indulgences, double wise, yea triple wise, he seduces them. First, In promising them to deliver them out of the pain from whence he does not, neither is able to deliver them; and so makes them falsely to believe that which they ought not to believe. Secondly, He deceives them of their money, which he takes for his indulgences. Thirdly, He seduces them in this, that promising to deliver them from pain, he induces them into grievous punishment indeed, for the heresy of simony, which both of them do commit, and therefore both are worthy of great pain to fall upon them; for so we read that Jesus cast out buyers and sellers out of his temple. Also Peter said unto Simon, the first author of this heresy, Thy money, said he, with thee be destroyed, for that thou hast thought the gift of God to be possessed for money. Moreover, whereas Christ saith, Freely you have received, freely give: and whereas on the contrary, the pope sells that which he hath taken; what doubt is there, but that he grievously deserves to be punished, both he that sells and he that buys, for the crime of simony which they commit. Over and besides, by many reasons and authorities of the scripture it may be proved, that he doth not absolve a man contrite for his sin, although he do absolve him from the guilt.

"But at this I marvel me, that he in his indulgences promises to absolve men from all manner of deadly sins, and

* From punishment and blame.

† Mark this.

yet cannot absolve a man from debt; forasmuch as the debt which we owe to God, is of much greater importance than is the debt of our brother. Wherefore if he be able to remit the debt due to God, much more it should seem that he is able to forgive the debt of our brother!

"Another thing there is that I marvel at, for that the pope showeth himself more strait in absolving a priest for not saying, or negligently saying his matins, than for transgressing the commandment of God; considering that the transgression of the commandment of God is much more grievous than the breach of man's commandment.

"For these and many other errors concurring in this matter of the pope's absolutions; blessed be God, and honour be unto him for the remission of our sins. And let us firmly believe and know, that He doth and will absolve us from our sins, if we are sorry from the bottom of our hearts that we have offended him, having a good purpose and will to offend him no more. And let us be bold to resort unto good and discreet priests, who with wholesome discretion and sound counsel can instruct us, how to avoid the corruption of sin hereafter. And which, because they are better than we, may pray to God for us; whereby we may both obtain sooner the remission of our sins past, and also may learn better how to avoid the danger of sin to come." *

* The doctrine of the church of Rome respecting confession and absolution, as confirmed by the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century, is, That our Lord Jesus Christ, when he ascended to heaven, constituted priests to be his vicars, *as judges, to whom the judgment of all mortal crimes should be referred*, that by the power of the keys, they may pronounce the remission, or the retaining, of the guilt of sin. Therefore it behoves penitents to declare in confession, all their *mortal* sins, which can be ascertained by most diligent examination of their consciences, even thoughts against the least commandment. Sins called *venial*, which do not exclude from the mercy of God, may be concealed and otherways expiated, although they ought to be revealed in confession. This distinction is wholly unscriptural, (see Matt. v. 19. Gal. iii. 10. James ii. 10.) and through it weak minds are often enslaved by their confessors, while by the casuistry of Romish theologians, most flagrant violations of the commandments, even murder and adultery, are often represented as only venial transgressions.

The decree of the Council of Trent then teaches that the power of the keys belongs to *priests only*, to whom is committed, "not merely a naked ministration or preaching of the gospel, or declaration of the remission of sins," but *a judicial act*, whereby sentence is pronounced as by a judge. "Therefore the penitent must not flatter himself concerning his faith, so as to think that on account of his faith only, he is absolved truly and in the sight of God, if there be no contrition, or the intention of the priest to absolve him be wanting." Heidegger (Tumulus Concil. Trident.) well observes, "Confession is the band that tieth together the kingdom of the papacy."

Walter Brute then proceeds to the matter of the sacraments. He says,

"Touching the matter of the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, divers men have divers opinions, as the learned know. As concerning my judgment upon the same, I firmly believe whatsoever the Lord Jesus taught implicitly or expressly to his disciples, and faithful people, to be believed. For he is, as I believe and know, the true Bread of God which descended from heaven, and giveth life to the world. Of which Bread whosoever eateth, shall live for ever; as it is in the sixth of John declared. Before the coming of Christ in the flesh, although men did live in body, yet in spirit they did not live; because all men were then under sin, whose souls thereby were dead. From the which death, no man by the law, nor with the law was justified. For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified, Gal. ii. And again in the same epistle, chap. iii. that by the law no man is justified before God it is manifest. For the just man shall live by his faith; the law is not of faith; but whosoever hath the works thereof, shall live in them. And again, in the same chapter, If the law had been given, which might have justified, then our righteousness had come by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise might be sure by the faith of Jesus Christ to all believers. Moreover, before that faith came, they were kept and concluded all under the law, until the coming of that faith which was to be revealed. For the law was our schoolmaster in Christ Jesus, that we should be justified by faith. Also the said Paul, Rom. v. saith, That the law entered in the mean time, whereby that sin might more abound. Where then sin hath more abounded, there hath also grace superabounded; that like as sin hath reigned unto death, so that grace might also reign by righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Whereby it is manifest, that by the faith which we have in Christ, believing him to be the true Son of God who came down from heaven to redeem us from sin, we are justified from sin; and so do live by him who is the true bread and meat of our souls. And the bread which Christ gave is his flesh, given for the life of the world, John vi. For he, being God, came down from heaven, and being truly carnal man,* did suffer in the flesh for our sins,

* Really having man's nature.

which in his divinity he could not suffer. Wherefore, like as we believe by our faith that he is true God; so must we also believe that he is a true man. And then do we eat the bread of heaven, and the flesh of Christ. And if we believe that he did voluntarily shed his blood for our redemption, then do we drink his blood. And thus, except we eat the flesh of the Son of man, and shall drink his blood, we have not eternal life in us; because the flesh of Christ verily is meat, and his blood is drink indeed; and whosoever eateth the flesh of Christ and drinketh his blood, abideth in Christ, and Christ in him, John, chap. vi."

The subject of the sacrament of the altar has been so fully treated by Wickliff and other reformers, that there is no occasion to give the arguments of Walter Brute upon this head. It is sufficient to say that he exposes many of the errors and superstitions of the church of Rome: among them he censures priests who bargain to sing mass for souls departed, thus he boldly attacked a main pillar of popery. Selling of prayer he notes as abominable, and says, "Many are deceived in buying or selling of prayers, as in the buying of pardons that they might be delivered from pain, when commonly they pay dearer for the prayers of proud and vicious prelates, than for those of devout women and devout men of the lay people."

Brute proceeds to expose the covetousness of the monastic orders, and writes with great boldness against the spiritual traffic of the church of Rome. He appears to have anticipated the downfal of the monastic establishments on account of their abuses, so that "taking away of temporalities from the clergy shall come to pass for the multitude of their sins." He concludes his long and able declarations in the following words:—

"Thus, reverend father, have I made mine answer to the matter whereof I am accused; beseeching you that as I have been obedient to your desire, and that even as a son, declaring unto you the secrets of my heart in plain words, although rudely, so I desire to know your opinion. And I crave your fatherly benevolence, that now your labour may be for my instruction and amendment, and not to accusation and condemnation. For like as in the beginning I have promised you, that if any man, of what state, sect, or condition soever he be, can show me any error in any of my writings, by the authority of holy scripture, or by any probable reason

grounded on the scriptures; I will receive his information willingly and humbly."

Fox proceeds, "After all the aforesaid things were exhibited and given by Walter Brute unto the bishop of Hereford, he appointed the third day of the month of October, at Hereford, with the continuance of the days following, to hear his opinion. Which day, being Friday, 1393, Walter Brute appeared before him, sitting in commission in the cathedral church of Hereford, at six o'clock; having for his assistants, divers prelates and abbots, and twenty bachelors of divinity, whereof twelve were monks, and two doctors of the law. Amongst these was Nicholas Hereford, formerly a follower of Wickliff, accompanied with many other prelates and worshipful men, and wise graduates in sundry faculties. Now was Walter apposed* of his writings aforesaid, and the contents therein. Earnest were they in picking out of those writings, his heresies, and in showing his schisms, sundry errors, and divers other things. After that they had continued all that day and the two days following, that is, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, in their informations and examinations, Walter Brute submitted himself to the determination of the church, and to the correction of the bishop, as it appears in a scroll written in the English tongue; the tenour of which is as follows:—'I Walter Brute submit myself principally to the evangely of Jesus Christ, and to the determination of holy church, and to the general councils of holy church. And to the sentence and determination of the four doctors of holy writ, that is, Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, and Gregory. And I meekly submit me to your correction, as a subject ought to his bishop.'

"Which scroll in the English tongue, Walter Brute read with a loud and intelligible voice, at the cross in the churchyard on Monday, the sixth of the said month of October, before the sermon made unto the people in presence of the bishop of Hereford and others above written, also other barons, knights, and noblemen, and clergy, and a great multitude of people. After which reading of the scroll, Thomas Crawlay, bachelor of divinity, made a sermon unto the people, and took for his theme the words of the apostle to the Romans, in the eleventh chapter: 'Be not over wise in your own conceits, but stand in fear,' &c.

"Out of these declarations and writings of Walter Brute,

* Questioned.

the bishop with the monks and doctors gathered and drew certain articles, to the number of thirty-seven, which they sent to the university of Cambridge to be confuted, unto two learned men, master Colwill, and master Newton, bachelors of divinity. Who both laboured in the matter, to the uttermost of their cunning, in replying and answering to the said thirty-seven articles.

"Besides them also, William Woodford, a friar, who wrote likewise against the articles of Wickliff, labouring in the same cause, made a solemn and a long tractation, against the articles of the said Brute.

"What after this became to this Walter Brute, or what end he had, I find it not registered; but like it is, that he for this time escaped. Other writings I find, which albeit they bear no name of this Walter, nor of any certain author, yet because they are in the same register adjoined to the history of him, I thought fit to be inserted. Of which one was a letter sent to Nicholas Hereford a little above specified; who being at the first a great follower of John Wickliff, was now in the number of them which sat upon this Walter, as is above recorded."

This letter is given by Fox, but need not be here inserted, nor another which follows, written under the name and character of Lucifer, prince of darkness, addressed to the persecuting prelates of the popish clergy, in which their wicked conduct is strongly depictured, and they are highly praised for their malpractices, and urged to go forward with increased energy in wresting the scriptures and persecuting the Lollards!* The followers of Wickliff were not yet openly put to death, but the latter part of this advice gives us information of the conduct of the popish prelates of that day. "If any man preach or teach otherwise than ye will, oppress them violently with the sentence of excommunication, and by your censures heaped one upon another, by the consent of your brethren. *Let him be kept in a most strait prison, and there tormented till he die, for a terrible example to all such as confess Christ.*"

* Several such letters are found among the writings of that day; it is worth noticing that they probably suggested to John Bunyan the idea of the epistles from Diabolus and his princes to their adherents in Mansoul, which are inserted in his inimitable treatise, the Holy War.

THE

EXAMINATIONS

OF

THE CONSTANT SERVANT OF GOD,

WILLIAM THORPE,

BEFORE ARCHBISHOP ARUNDEL.

Written by himself, A.D. 1407, and originally printed by William Tindal.

NEXT comes to our hands the worthy history of master William Thorpe, a valiant warrior, under the triumphant banner of Christ, with the process of his examinations before Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, written by the said Thorpe, and storied by his own pen, at the request of his friends, as by his own words in the process hereof may appear. In whose examination, which seems first to begin, anno 1407, good reader, thou shalt have both to learn and to marvel. To learn, in that thou shalt hear truth discoursed and discussed, with the contrary reasons of the adversary dissolved. To marvel, for that thou shalt behold in this man, the marvellous force and strength of the Lord's might, Spirit, and grace, working and fighting in his soldiers, and also speaking in their mouths, according to the word of his promise, Luke xxi.

To the text of the story we have neither added nor diminished; but as we have received it copied out, and corrected by master William Tindal, who had it in Thorpe's own hand-writing, so we have here sent it, and set it out abroad. Although for the more credit of the matter, I rather wished it in his own natural speech, wherein it was first written. Notwithstanding, to put away all doubt and scruple herein, this I thought before to premonish and testify to the reader, touching the certainty hereof, that they are yet alive who have seen the selfsame copy in his own old English, resembling the true antiquity both of the speech, and of the time. The name of whom, as for record of the same to avouch, is M. Whitehead; who as he hath seen the true ancient copy in the hands of George Constantine, so hath he given credible relation of the same, both to the printer, and to me. What the causes were why this good man and servant of Christ, William Thorpe, did write it, and pen it out himself, is sufficiently declared in his own preface, set before his book, which here is prefixed in manner as follows.—*Fox, Acts and Monuments.*

This tract was condemned and prohibited by the Romish clergy, in the reign of Henry VIII., and frequent mention is made of persons who were censured for reading it. Constantine assisted Tindal in his translation of the new testament. Whitehead was one of the persons recommended by Cranmer for archbishop of Armagh. He was an exile in the reign of queen Mary. During the early part of the reign of Elizabeth, he was highly respected, and employed in several public matters respecting the reformation, but was afterwards sequestered for nonconformity.

THE

PREFACE OF WILLIAM THORPE.

THE Lord God that knoweth all things, knoweth well that I am right sorrowful to write or make known this sentence beneath written; whereby of my fellow christian, set in high state and dignity, so great blindnsss and malice may be known, that they which do presume of themselves to destroy vices, and to plant virtues in men, neither dread to offend God, nor desire to please him, as their works do show. For certes the bidding of God and his law, which in the praising of his most holy name he commandeth to be known and kept of all men and women, young and old, after the skill and power that he hath given to them, the prelates of this land and their ministers, with the covent* of priests chiefly consenting to them, enforce themselves most busily to withstand, and destroy the holy ordinance of God. And therethrough God is greatly wroth and moved to take hard vengeance, not only upon them that do the evil, but also on them that consent to these limbs of antichrist, which know, or might know their malice and falsehood, and dress them not to withstand their malice and their great pride. Nevertheless, four things move me to write this sentence.

The first is this; that whereas it was known to certain friends, that I came from the prison of Shrewsbury, and as it befell that I should be had to the prison of Canterbury, then divers friends in divers places spake to me full heartily and full tenderly, and commanded me if it so were that I should be examined before the archbishop of Canterbury, that if I might in any wise, I should write mine opposing, and mine answering. And I promised to my special friends, that if I might, I would gladly do their bidding as I might.

The second thing that moves me to write this sentence is this: divers friends, who have heard that I have been examined before the archbishop, have come to me in prison, and counselled me busily, and coveted greatly that I should do the same thing. And other brethren have sent to me, and required on God's behalf, that I should write out and make known both mine apposing and mine answering, for the profit that, as they say, upon my making it known may

* Assembly.

come thereof. But this they bade me, that I should be busy in all my skill, to go as near the sentence and the words as I could, both that were spoken to me, and that I spake; peradventure this writing may come another time before the archbishop and his counsel. And of this counselling I was right glad, for in my conscience I was moved to do this thing, and to ask hitherto the special help of God. And so then I, considering the great desire of divers friends of sundry places, according all in one, I occupied all my mind and my wits so busily, that through God's grace I perceived, by their meaning and their charitable desire, some profit might come therethrough. For soothfastness and truth hath these conditions; wherever it is impugned, it has a sweet smell, and thereof comes a sweet savour. And the more violently the enemies dress themselves to oppress and to withstand the truth, the greater and the sweeter smell comes thereof. And therefore this heavenly smell of God's word, will not as a smoke pass away with the wind; but it will descend and rest in some clean soul that thirsteth thereafter. And thus by this writing may be somewhat perceived through God's grace, how that the enemies of the truth, standing boldly in their malice, enforce them to withstand the freedom of Christ's gospel; for which freedom, Christ became man and shed his heart's blood. And therefore it is great pity and sorrow, that many men and women do their own wayward will, and busy them not to know nor to do the pleasant will of God.

The men and women that hear the truth, and hear or know of this, perceiving what is now in the church, ought herethrough to be the more moved in all their skill to able themselves to grace, and to set lesser price by themselves, that they, without tarrying, forsake wilfully and bodily all the wretchedness of this life, since they know not how soon, nor when, nor where, nor by whom, God will teach them and assay their patience. For no doubt, whoever will live piteously, that is charitably in Christ Jesus, shall suffer now here in this life persecution, in one wise or another. That is, if we shall be saved, it behoves us to imagine full busily the vileness and foulness of sin, and how the Lord God is displeased therefore; and so of this vileness and hideousness of sin, it behoves us to busy us in all our wits, ever to abhor and hold in our mind a great shame of sin, and so then we ought to sorrow heartily therefore, and ever flee all occasion thereof. And then it behoves us to take upon us sharp

penance, (repentance,) continuing therein, to obtain of the Lord forgiveness of our foredone sins, and grace to abstain us hereafter from sin. And if we enforce us not to do this willingly, and in convenient time, the Lord, if he will not utterly destroy and cast us away, will in divers manners move tyrants against us; to constrain us violently to do penance, which we would not do willingly. And trust that this doing is a special grace of the Lord, and a great token of life and mercy. And no doubt whoever will not apply himself, as is said before, to punish himself willingly, neither will suffer patiently, meekly, and gladly the rod of the Lord, howsoever he shall punish him; their wayward wills and their impatience are unto them earnest of everlasting damnation. But because there are but few in number that do endeavour thus faithfully to obtain grace, to live here so simply and purely, and without gall of malice and of grudging, therefore the lovers of this world hate and pursue them that they know to be patient, meek, chaste, and willingly poor, hating and fleeing all worldly vanities and fleshly lusts. For surely their virtuous conditions are even contrary to the manners of this world.

The third thing that moves me to write this sentence is this. I thought I shall busy me in myself to do faithfully, that all men and women, occupying all their business in knowing and in keeping of God's commandments, strive so to grace, that they might understand truly the truth, and have and use virtue and prudence, and so deserve to be lightened from above with heavenly wisdom; so that all their words and their works may be hereby made pleasant sacrifices unto the Lord God; and not only for help of their own souls, but also for edification of all holy church. For I doubt not, but all they that will apply them to have this aforesaid business, shall profit full well both to friends and foes. For some enemies of the truth, through the grace of God, shall through charitable folks be made astonished in their conscience, and peradventure be converted from vices to virtues; and also, they that labour to know and to keep faithfully the biddings of God, and to suffer patiently all adversities, shall hereby comfort many friends.

And the fourth thing that moveth me to write this sentence is this. I know by my sudden and unwarned opposing and answering, that all they that will of good heart, without feigning, endeavour willingly and gladly, after their skill and their power, to follow Christ patiently, labouring

busily, privately and openly, in work and in word, to withdraw whomsoever they may from vices, planting in them, if they may, virtues, comforting them and furthering them that stand in grace; so that therewith they be not borne up in vain glory through presumption of their wisdom, nor inflamed with any worldly prosperity, but ever be meek and patient; purposing to abide steadfastly in the will of God, suffering willingly and gladly, without any grudging, whatsoever rod the Lord will chastise them with—that then this good Lord will not forget to comfort all such men and women, in all their tribulations, and at every point of temptation that any enemy purposed for to do against them. To such faithful lovers especially, and patient followers of Christ, the Lord sendeth by his wisdom from above, that which the adversaries of the truth may not know nor understand. But through their old and new unshamefaced sins, those tyrants and enemies of the truth shall be so blinded and obstinate in evil, that they shall think themselves to do pleasant sacrifices unto the Lord God in their malicious and wrongful pursuing and destroying of innocent men's and women's bodies. Which men and women, for their virtuous living, and for their true acknowledging of the truth, and their patient, willing, and glad suffering of persecution for righteousness, deserve, through the grace of God, to be heirs of the endless bliss of heaven. And for the fervent desire and great love that these men have, as to stand in the truth, and witness of it, though they are suddenly and unwarnedly brought forth to be opposed of their adversaries; yet the Holy Ghost, who moveth and ruleth them through his charity, will in that hour of their answering speak in them, and show his wisdom, that all their enemies shall not againsay, nor againstand, lawfully.

And therefore, all they are steadfast in the faith of God, who through diligent keeping of his commandments, and for their patient suffering of whatsoever adversity cometh to them, hope surely in his mercy, purposing to stand continually in perfect charity. For those men and women dread not so the adversities of this life, that they will fear, after their knowledge and their power, to acknowledge prudently the truth of God's word, when, where, and to whom they think their acknowledging may profit. Yea, and though therefore persecution come to them in one wise or another, certes, they patiently take it, knowing their conversation to be in heaven. It is a high reward and a

special grace of God, to have and enjoy the everlasting inheritance of heaven, for the suffering of one persecution in so short time as is the term of this life. For lo, this heavenly heritage and endless reward is the Lord God himself, which is the best thing that may be. This sentence the Lord God himself witnesseth, whereas he said to Abraham, I am thy reward: and as the Lord said, he was and is the reward of Abraham, so he is of all other his saints. This most blessed and best reward, may he grant to us all for his holy name, who made us of nought, and sent his only most dear worthy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to redeem us with his most precious heart's blood. Am

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THE

EXAMINATION OF WILLIAM THORPE.*

PENNED WITH HIS OWN HAND.

KNOWN be it to all men who read or hear this writing, that on the Sunday next after the feast of St. Peter, which we call Lammas, in the year of our Lord, 1407, I William Thorpe, being in prison in the castle of Saltwood, was brought before Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, then chancellor of England. When I came to him, he stood in a great chamber, and much people about him; and when he saw me, he went fast into a closet, bidding all secular men that followed him to go forth from him soon, so that no man was left then in that closet but the archbishop himself, and a physician who was called Malveren, the parson of St. Dunstan's in London, and two other persons unknown to me, who were ministers of the law.

And I standing before them, the archbishop said to me; William, I know well that thou hast this twenty winters and more, travelled about busily in the north country, and in divers other countries of England, sowing about false doctrine, having great business if thou might, with thine untrue teaching and shrewd will to infect and poison all this land.* But through the grace of God thou art now withstood and brought into my ward, so that I shall now

* Thorpe had written a tract in which he complained much of the wickedness of the popish clergy.

sequester thee from thine evil purpose, and hinder thee to envenom the sheep of my province. Nevertheless, St. Paul saith, If it may be, as much as in us is, we ought to have peace with all men. Therefore, William, if thou wilt now meekly and of good heart, without any feigning, kneel down, and lay thy hand upon a book and kiss it, promising faithfully as I shall here charge thee, that thou wilt submit thee to my correction, and stand to mine ordinance, and fulfil it duly by all thy skill and power, thou shalt yet find me gracious unto thee.

Then said I to the archbishop, Sir, since ye deem me a heretic, and out of belief, will you give me here audience to tell my belief? And he said, Yea, tell on. And I said, I believe that there is but one God almighty, and in this Godhead, and of this Godhead are three persons, that is, the Father, the Son, and the soothfast* Holy Ghost. And I believe that all these three persons are even in power and in knowledge, and in might, full of grace and of all goodness. For whatsoever the Father doth, or can, or will, that also the Son doth and can and will; and in all their power, knowledge, and will, the Holy Ghost is equal to the Father, and to the Son.

Beside this I believe, that through counsel of this most blessed Trinity, in most convenient time, before ordained, for the salvation of mankind, the second Person of this Trinity was ordained to take the form of man, that is the kind† of man. And I believe, that this second Person, our Lord Jesus Christ, was conceived through the Holy Ghost of the most blessed virgin Mary. And I believe that Christ was born of this most blessed virgin.

And I believe, that Christ our Saviour was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth, in fulfilling of the law; and his name was called Jesus, which was so called of the angel, before that he was conceived of Mary his mother.

And I believe that Christ, when he was about thirty years old, was baptized in the flood of Jordan by John Baptist; and in the likeness of a dove, the Holy Ghost descended there upon him, and a voice was heard from heaven, saying, Thou art my well-beloved Son, in thee I am full pleased.

And I believe that Christ was moved then by the Holy Ghost to go into the desert, and there he fasted forty days and forty nights without bodily meat and drink. And I believe that by and by, after his fasting, when the manhood

* True. † Nature.

of Christ hungered, the fiend came to him, and tempted him in gluttony, in vain glory, and in covetousness. But in all those temptations Christ withstood the fiend, and overcame him. And then, without tarrying, Jesus began to preach, and to say unto the people, Do ye penance,* for the realm of heaven is now at hand.

I believe that Christ in all his time here lived most holily, and taught the will of his Father most truly; and I believe that he suffered therefore most wrongfully, greatest reproofs and despisings. And after this, when Christ would make an end of this temporal life, I believe that in the day next before he suffered in the morn, in form of bread and of wine he ordained the sacrament of his flesh and his blood; that is his own precious body, and gave it to his apostles to eat; commanding them, and by them all their after comers, that they should do it in this form that he showed to them, use themselves, and teach and commune forth to other men and women this most worshipful and holiest sacrament, in mindfulness of his holiest living, and of his most true preaching, and of his willing and patient suffering of the most painful passion.

And I believe that this Christ our Saviour, after he had ordained this most worthy sacrament of his own precious body, went forth willingly against his enemies; and he suffered them most patiently to lay their hands most violently upon him, and to bind him, and to lead him forth as a thief, and to scorn him and buffet him, and to defile him with their spittings. Besides this, I believe that Christ suffered most meekly and patiently his enemies to ding out with sharp scourges the blood that was between the skin and his flesh. Yea, without grudging, Christ suffered the cruel Jews to crown him with most sharp thorns, and to strike him with a reed. And afterwards, Christ suffered wicked Jews to draw him out upon the cross, and to nail him thereupon hand and foot. And so through his pitiful nailing, Christ shed willingly for man's life, the blood that was in his veins. And then Christ gave willingly his spirit into the hands or power of his Father, and so, as he would, and when he would, Christ died willingly for man's sake upon the cross. And notwithstanding that Christ was willingly, painfully, and most shamefully put to death, as to the world; there was left blood and water in his heart, as before ordained, that he should shed out this blood and this

* By penance the reformers mean repentance, not the Romish penance.

water for man's salvation. And therefore he suffered the Jews to make a blind knight* to thrust him in the heart with a spear; and this blood and water that was in his heart, Christ would shed out for man's love; and after this, I believe that Christ was taken down from the cross and buried. And I believe that on the third day, by the power of his Godhead, Christ rose again from death to life. And the fortieth day thereafter, I believe that Christ ascended up into heaven, and that he there sitteth on the right hand of the Father almighty. And the fiftieth day after his up-going, he sent to his apostles the Holy Ghost, that he had promised them before; and I believe that Christ shall come and judge all mankind, some to everlasting peace, and some to everlasting pains.

And as I believe in the Father, and in the Son, that they are one God almighty, so I believe in the Holy Ghost, that he is also with them the same God almighty.

And I believe a holy church, that is, all they that have been, and that now are, and always to the end of the world shall be, a people which shall endeavour to know and to keep the commandments of God; dreading above all things to offend God, and loving and seeking most to please him. And I believe, that all they that have had, and yet have, and all they that yet shall have, the aforesaid virtues, surely standing in the belief of God, hoping steadfastly in his merciful doings, continuing to their end in perfect charity, willingly, patiently, and gladly suffering persecutions, by the example of Christ chiefly, and his apostles; all these have their names written in the book of life.

Therefore I believe, that the gathering together of this people, living now here in this life, is the holy church of God, fighting here on earth against the fiend, the prosperity of the world, and their fleshly lusts. Wherefore, seeing that all the gathering together of this church before said, and every part thereof, neither coveteth, nor willeth, nor loveth, nor seeketh any thing but to eschew the offence of God, and to do his pleasing will meekly, gladly, and willingly, with all mine heart, I submit myself unto this holy church of Christ, to be ever submissive and obedient to the

* The Golden Legend relates that the soldier who pierced Christ's side was blind, but some of the blood running down upon his hands, he touched his eyes and saw clearly; after which he abode with the apostles. He is reckoned among the Romish saints as St. Longius, applying a Greek word, which signifies spear, to the person who wielded it!

ordinance of it, and of every member thereof, according to my knowledge and power, by the help of God. Therefore I acknowledge now, and evermore shall, if God will, that with all my heart, and with all my might, I will submit me only to the rule and governance of them, whom after my knowledge I may perceive, by the having and using of the beforesaid virtues, to be members of the holy church. Wherefore these articles of belief and all others, both of the old law and of the new, which after the commandment of God any man ought to believe, I believe verily in my soul, as a sinful mortal wretch, of my knowledge and power, ought to believe; praying the Lord God for his holy name to increase my belief, and to help my unbelief.

And because to the praising of God's name, I desire above all things to be a faithful member of holy church, I make this protestation before you all four that are now here present, coveting that all men and women who now are absent knew the same. That is, what thing soever before this time I have said or done, or what I shall do or say at any time hereafter, I believe, that all the old law and new law, given and ordained by counsel of the three persons of the Trinity, were given and written for the salvation of mankind. And I believe, that these laws are sufficient for man's salvation. And I believe every article of these laws, to the intent that these articles, ordained and commanded of these three persons of the most blessed Trinity are to be believed.

And therefore to the rule and the ordinance of these God's laws, meekly, gladly, and willingly, I submit me with all mine heart; that whosoever can or will, by authority of God's law, or by open reason, tell me that I have erred or now err, or any time hereafter shall err in any article of belief, from which inconvenience God keep me for his goodness, I submit me to be reconciled, and to be submissive and obedient unto those laws of God, and to every article of them. For by authority especially of these laws I will, through the grace of God, be united charitably unto these laws. Yea, sir, and over this, I believe and admit all the sentences, authorities, and reasons of the saints and doctors, according unto holy scripture, and declaring it truly.

I submit me willingly and meekly, to be ever obedient, after my knowledge and power, to all these saints and doctors, as they are obedient in work and in word, to God and to his law, and farther not, to my knowledge, not for any earthly power, dignity or state, through the help of God.

But, sir, I pray you tell me, if after your bidding I shall lay my hand upon the book, to what intent—to swear thereby?

And the archbishop said to me, Yea, wherefore else? And I said to him, Sir, a book is nothing else but a thing coupled together of divers creatures, and to swear by any creature, both God's law and man's law is against it. But, sir, this thing I say here to you before these your clerks, with my aforesaid protestation, that how, where, when, and to whom, men are bound to swear or to obey in any wise after God's law, and saints, and true doctors, according with God's law, I will through God's grace be ever ready thereto, with all my knowledge and power. But I pray you, sir, for the charity of God, that you will, before I swear, as I have here rehearsed to you, tell me how or whereto I shall submit me; and show me whereof you will correct me, and what is the ordinance that you will thus oblige me to fulfil.

And the archbishop said unto me, I will shortly that now thou swear here to me, that thou shalt forsake all the opinions which the sect of Lollards hold, and is slandered with. So that after this time, neither privily nor openly, thou hold any opinion which I shall, after thou hast sworn, rehearse to thee here. Nor shalt thou favour any man or woman, young or old, that holdeth any of these aforesaid opinions; but after thy knowledge and power thou shalt force thee to withstand all such troublers of holy church in every diocese that thou comest in. And those that will not leave their false and damnable opinions, thou shalt put them up, publishing them and their names, and make them known to the bishop of the diocese that they are in, or to the bishop's ministers. And over this, I will that thou preach no more until the time that I know by good witness and true, that thy conversation is such, that thy heart and thy mouth accord truly in one, contrarying all the lewd* learning that thou hast taught here before.

I, hearing these words, thought in my heart that this was an unlawful asking; and deemed myself cursed of God if I consented hereto, and I thought how Susanna said, Anguish is to me on every side. And in that I stood still and spake not, the archbishop said to me, Answer one way or other. And I said, Sir, if I consented to you thus as you have herebefore rehearsed to me, I should become an appealer, or every bishop's spy, summoner of all

* Foolish.

England.* For if I should thus put up and publish the names of men and women, I should herein deceive full many persons. Yea, sir, it is likely by the doom of my conscience I should herein be cause of the death, both of men and women, yea both bodily and spiritually. For many men and women who stand now in the way of salvation, if I should, for their learning and reading, or their belief, publish them therefore up to the bishops or to their unpiteous ministers, I know by experience that they should be so troubled and tormented with persecution or otherwise, that many of them, I think, would rather choose to forsake the way of truth than to be travailed, scorned, slandered, or punished, as bishops and their ministers now use to constrain men and women to consent to them.

But I find in no place in holy scripture, that this office, which ye would now endow me with, accords to any priest of Christ's sect, nor to any other christian man: and therefore to do this were to me a full noious† bond to be bounden with, and over grievous charge. For I suppose, that if I did thus, many men and women would, yea, sir, might justly to my confusion say to me, that I was a traitor to God and to them; since, as I think in mine heart, many men and women trust in this case, that I would not for saving of my life do thus to them. For if I thus should do, full many men and women would, as they might full truly, say that I had falsely and cowardly forsaken the truth, and slandered shamefully the word of God. For if I consented to you, to do hereafter your will, for bonchefe or mischief,‡ that may befall unto me in this life, I deem in my conscience, that I were worthy to be cursed of God and also of all his saints; from which inconvenience keep me and all christian people, almighty God, now and ever for his holy name.

Then the archbishop said unto me, Oh, thine heart is full hard indurate,§ as was the heart of Pharaoh; and the devil hath overcome thee, and perverted thee, and he hath so blinded thee in all thy understanding, that thou hast no grace to know the truth, nor the measure of mercy that I have proffered to thee. Therefore, as I perceive now by thy foolish answer, thou hast no will to leave thine old errors. But I say to thee lewd losel,‖ either quickly consent

* An appealer is one who gives evidence against his accomplices.
† Hurtful. ‡ Good or evil. § Hardened.
‖ Ignorant, good-for-nothing fellow.

thou to mine ordinance, and submit thee to stand to my decrees, or, by St. Thomas, thou shalt be degraded, and follow thy fellow into Smithfield.*

At this saying I stood still and spake not, but I thought in mine heart, that God did to me great grace, if he would of his great mercy bring me to such an end. And in mine heart I was nothing afraid at this menacing of the archbishop. And I considered there two things in him. One, that he was not yet sorrowful that he had made William Sautre wrongfully to be burnt: and, as I considered, that the archbishop thirsted yet after more shedding out of innocent blood. And fast therefore I was moved in my judgment, to hold the archbishop neither for prelate nor for priest of God. And for that mine inward man was thus altogether departed from the archbishop, methought I should not have any dread of him. But I was right heavy and sorrowful, for that there was no audience of secular men by; but in my heart I prayed the Lord God to comfort me and strengthen me against those that there were against the truth. And I purposed to speak no more to the archbishop and his clerks than needed; and all thus I prayed God for his goodness to give me, then and always, grace to speak with a meek and an easy spirit; and whatsoever thing I should speak, that I might thereto have true authorities of the scriptures or open reason. And for that I stood thus still and nothing spake, one of the archbishop's clerks said unto me, What musest thou? Do thou as my lord hath now commanded to thee here?

And yet I stood still and answered him not; and then soon after the archbishop said to me, Art thou not yet bethought, whether thou wilt do as I have said to thee? And I said then to him, Sir, my father and my mother, on whose souls God have mercy if it be his will, spent much money in divers places about my learning, for the intent to have made me a priest to God. But when I came to years of discretion, I had no will to be priest, and therefore my friends were right heavy to me, and then methought their grudging against me was so painful to me, that I purposed therefore to have left their company. And when they perceived this in me, they spake sometime full fair and pleasant words to me. But for that they might not make me to consent of good heart to be a priest, they spake to me full oftentimes very grievous words, and menaced me in divers

* He meaneth God's martyr, William Sautre.—*Fox.*

manners, showing to me full heavy cheer. And thus one while in fair manner, another while in grievous, they were long time, as methought, full busy about me, ere I consented to them to be a priest.

But at the last, when in this matter they would no longer suffer mine excusations, but either I should consent to them, or I should ever bear their indignation, yea their curse, as they said, then I seeing this, prayed them that they would give me license to go to them that were said to be wise priests, and of virtuous conversation, to have their counsel, and to know of them the office and the charge of priesthood. And hereto my father and my mother consented full gladly, and gave me their blessing, and good leave to go, and also money to spend in this journey. And so I went to those priests whom I heard to be of best name, and of most holy living, and best learned, and most wise of heavenly wisdom; and so I communed with them unto the time, that I perceived, by their virtuous and continual occupations, that their honest and charitable works passed their fame which I had heard before of them.

Wherefore, sir, by the example of the doctrine of them, and especially for the godly and innocent works which I perceived then of them, and in them, after my skill and power, I have exercised me then and in this time, to know perfectly God's law, having a will and desire to live thereafter, which willeth that all men and women should exercise themselves faithfully thereabout. If then, sir, either for pleasure of them that are neither so wise, nor of so virtuous conversation to my knowledge, nor by common fame to any other men's knowledge in this land, as these men were of whom I took my counsel and information, I should now forsake thus suddenly, and shortly, and unwarned, all the learning that I have exercised myself in, these thirty winters and more, my conscience should ever be herewith out of measure unquieted; and, sir, I know well, that many men and women should be therethrough greatly troubled and slandered. And as I said, sir, to you before, for mine untruth and false cowardness, many a one should be put into full great reproof. Yea, sir, I dread that many a one, as they might then justly do, would curse me full bitterly. And, sir, I fear not, but the curse of God, which I should deserve herein, would bring me to a full evil end, if I continued thus. And if through remorse of conscience I repented me any time, returning into the way which you do your

diligence to constrain me now to forsake; yea, sir, all the bishops of this land, with full many other priests, would defame me, and pursue me as a relapse. And they that now have, though I am unworthy, some confidence in me, hereafter would never trust to me, though I could teach and live ever so virtuously, more than I can or may. For if, after your counsel, I left utterly all my learning, I should hereby first wound and defile mine own soul, and also I should herethrough give occasion to many men and women of full sore hurting. Yea, sir, as it is likely to me, if I consented to your will, I should herein by mine evil example in it, as far as in me were, slay many folk spiritually, that I should never deserve to have grace of God to the edifying of his church, neither of myself, nor of any other man's life, and should be undone both before God and man.

But, sir, by example chiefly of some, whose names I will not now rehearse, of H., of I. P., and B.,* and also by the present doing of Philip Rampington,† that now is become bishop of Lincoln, I am now learned, as many more hereafter through God's grace shall be learned, to hate and to flee all such slander as these aforesaid men chiefly have defiled principally themselves with. And in it that in them is, they have envenomed all the church of God, for the slanderous revoking at the cross of Paul's, of H. P. and of B., and how now Philip Rampington pursues Christ's people! And the feigning whereby these men dissemble by worldly prudence, keeping them cowardly in their preaching and communing within the bonds and terms, which without blame may be spoken and showed out of the most worldly livers, will not be unpunished of God. For to the point of truth, that these men showed out sometime, they will not now stretch forth their lives. But by example each one of them, as their words and their works show, busy them, through their feigning, to slander and to pursue Christ in his members, rather than they will be pursued.

And the archbishop said to me, These men, the which thou speakest of now, were fools and heretics, when they were counted wise men of thee and other such losels. But now they are wise men, though thou and other such deem them unwise. Nevertheless, I never wist any that rightly

* Probably Nicholas Hereford, John Purvey, and John Becket.

† Philip Repington made bishop, and a persecutor, on that account afterwards called of the brethren Rampington.—*Fox.* *See Life of Wickliff.*

said, that any while were envenomed with your contagiousness, that is, contaminated and spotted doctrine.

I said to the archbishop, Sir, I think well that these men and such others are now wise as to this world. But as their words sounded sometime, and their works showed outwardly, it was like to move me that they had earnest of the wisdom of God; and that they should have deserved much grace of God to have saved their own souls and many other men's, if they had continued faithfully in willing poverty, and in other simple virtuous living. And especially if they had with these aforesaid virtues continued in their busy fruitful sowing of God's word; as to many men's knowledge they occupied them a season in all their skill, full busily to know the pleasant will of God, travailing all their members full busily to do thereafter, purely and chiefly to the praising of the most holy name of God, and for grace of edification and salvation of christian people. But wo worth false covetousness, and evil counsel and tyranny, by which they and many men and women are led blindly into an evil end.

Then the archbishop said unto me, Thou, and such other losels of thy sect, would shave your beards full near to have a benefice. For, by ——, I know none more covetous shrews than ye are, when that ye have a benefice. For lo, I gave to John Purvey a benefice but a mile out of this castle, and I heard more complaints about his covetousness for tithes, and other misdoings, than I did of all men that were advanced within my diocese.

And I said to the archbishop, Sir, Purvey is neither with you now for the benefice that you gave him, nor holdeth he faithfully with the learning that he taught and wrote before time. Thus he showeth himself neither to be hot nor cold, and therefore he and his fellows may sorely dread, that if they turn not hastily to the way that they have forsaken, peradventure they be put out of the number of Christ's chosen people.

And the archbishop said, Though Purvey be now a false harlot,* I quit me now to him. But come he more for such cause before me, ere we part I shall know with whom he holdeth. But I say to thee, Which are these holy men and wise, of whom thou hast taken thine information?

* Or knave. This name was originally applied to a pretended religious sect, from whence it became a term of reproach.

I said, Sir, master John Wickliff was holden of full many men the greatest clerk that they knew then living, and therewith he was named a passing ruly* man, and an innocent in his living. Therefore great men communed oft with him, and they loved so his learning, that they wrote it, and busily inforced them to rule themselves thereafter. Therefore, sir, this aforesaid learning of master John Wickliff is yet holden, of full many men and women, the learning most agreeable unto the living and teaching of Christ, and of his apostles, and most openly showing and declaring how the church of Christ hath been and yet should be ruled and governed. Therefore so many men and women covet this learning, and purpose through God's grace, to conform their living like to this learning of Wickliff. Master John Ashton taught and wrote accordingly and full busily, where, and when, and to whom that he might, and he used it himself right perfectly unto his life's end. And also Philip of Rampington, while he was a canon of Leicester, Nicholas Hereford, David Gotray of Packering, monk of Byland, and a master of divinity, and John Purvey, and many others which were holden right wise men and prudent, taught and wrote busily this aforesaid learning, and conformed them thereto. And with all these men I was right homely,† and communed with them long time and oft. And so before all other men I chose willingly to be informed of them and by them, and especially of Wickliff himself, as of the most virtuous and godly wise man that I heard of or knew. And therefore of him especially, and of these men I took the learning that I have taught; and purpose to live thereafter, if God will, to my life's end. For though some of those men now are contrary to the learning that they taught before, I know well that their learning was true which they taught; and therefore, with the help of God, I purpose to hold and to use the learning which I heard of them, while they sat on Moses's chair, and especially while they sat on the chair of Christ. But according to the works that they now do, I will not do, with God's help. For they feign, and hide, and contrary the truth, which before they taught out plainly and truly. For as I know well, when some of those men have been blamed for their slanderous doing, they grant not that they have taught amiss or erred before time, but that they were

* Quiet, orderly. † Familiar.

constrained by pain to leave to tell out the truth, and thus they choose now rather to blaspheme God, and to suffer awhile here persecution bodily, for the truths that Christ shed out his heart blood for.

And the archbishop said, That learning which thou callest truth and verity is open slander to holy church, as it is proved of holy church. For albeit that Wickliff, your author, was a great clerk, and though many men held him to be a perfect liver, yet his doctrine is not approved of holy church, but many sentences of his learning are condemned, as they well worthy are. But as touching Philip of Rampington, that was first canon, and after abbot of Leicester, which is now bishop of Lincoln, I tell thee, that the day is coming, for which he fasted the even. For neither he holdeth now, nor will hold the learning that he taught, when he was a canon of Leicester. For no bishop of this land pursueth now more sharply those that hold thy way, than he doth.

I said, Sir, full many men and women wonder upon him, and speak much shame on him, and hold him for a cursed enemy of the truth.

The archbishop said to me, Wherefore tarriest thou me thus here with such fables; wilt thou shortly, as I have said to thee, submit thee to me or no?

I said, Sir, I tell you at one word; I dare not for the dread of God submit me to you, after the tenour and sentence that ye have above rehearsed to me.

Then, as if he had been wroth, he said to one of his clerks, Fetch hither quickly the certification that came to me from Shrewsbury under the bailiffs' seal, witnessing the errors and heresies which this losel hath venomously sown there.

Then hastily the clerk took out, and laid forth on a cupboard divers rolls and writings, among which there was a little one, which the clerk delivered to the archbishop. And by and by the archbishop read this roll, containing this sentence:—

"The third Sunday after Easter, the year of our Lord 1407, William Thorpe came unto the town of Shrewsbury, and through leave granted unto him to preach, he said openly in St. Chad's church, in his sermon, that the sacrament of the altar, after the consecration, was material bread. And that images should in no wise be worshipped. And

that men should not go on pilgrimages. And that priests have no title to tithes. And that it is not lawful to swear in any wise."

And when the archbishop had read thus this roll, he rolled it up again, and said to me, Is this wholesome learning to be among the people?

I said, Sir, I am both ashamed on their behalf, and right sorrowful for them that have certified you these things thus untruly; for I never preached nor taught thus, privily nor openly.

And the archbishop said, I will give credence to these worshipful men which have written to me, and witnessed under their seals there among them. Though now thou deniest this, weenest thou that I will give credence to thee? Thou, losel, hast troubled the worshipful commonalty of Shrewsbury, so that the bailiffs and commonalty of that town have written to me, praying me, that am archbishop of Canterbury, primate and chancellor of England, that I will vouchsafe to grant them, that if thou shalt be made, as thou art worthy, to suffer open iouresse* for thine heresies, that thou may have thy iouresse openly there among them.† So that all they whom thou and such other losels have there perverted, may through fear of thy deed be reconciled again to the unity of holy church; and also they that stand in true faith of holy church, may through thy deed be more established therein. And as if this asking well pleased the archbishop, he said, By my thrift this hearty prayer and fervent request shall be thought on.

But, certainly, neither the prayer of the men of Shrewsbury, nor the menacing of the archbishop made me anything afraid. But, in rehearsing of this malice, and in the hearing of it, my heart greatly rejoiced, and yet doth. I thank God for the grace that I then thought, and yet think shall come to all the church of God herethrough, by the especial merciful doing of the Lord. And as having no dread of the malice of tyrants, by trusting steadfastly in the help of the Lord, with full purpose to acknowledge the truth, and to stand thereby after my skill and power, I said to the archbishop, Sir, if the truth of God's word might now be accepted as it should be, I doubt not to prove by likely

* Pain or punishment—penance. Perhaps from the French *jouer*.

† O Shrewsbury, thou hast a cause to repent thee, in that thou wouldest not receive the truth when it was offered thee.—*Fox*.

evidence, that they who are feigned to be out of the faith of holy church in Shrewsbury, and in other places also, are in the true faith of holy church. For as their words sound, and their works show to man's judgment, dreading and loving faithfully God, their will, their desire, their love, and their business are most set to dread to offend God, and to love to please him in true and faithful keeping of his commandments. And again, they that are said to be in the faith of holy church in Shrewsbury and in other places, by open evidence of their proud, envious, malicious, covetous, lecherous, and other foul words and works, neither know, nor have will to know, nor to occupy their minds truly and effectually in the right faith of holy church. Wherefore, neither all these, nor any that follow their manners, shall any time come verily in the faith of holy church, except they enforce them more truly to come in the way which now they despise. For these men and women, that are now called faithful and holden just, neither know, nor will exercise themselves to know faithfully the commandment of God.

And thus full many men and women now, and especially men that are named to be principal limbs of holy church, stir God to great wrath, and deserve his curse for that they call or hold them just men, which are full unjust, as their vicious words, their great customable swearing, and their slanderous and shameful works show openly and witness. And therefore such vicious men and unjust, to their own confusion, call them unjust men and women, who after their power and judgment busy themselves to live justly after the commandment of God. And, sir, you say that I have troubled the commonalty of Shrewsbury, and many other men and women with my teaching. If it thus be, it is not to be wondered at of wise men; since all the commonalty of the city of Jerusalem was troubled at Christ's own person, who was very God and man, and the most prudent preacher that ever was or shall be. And also all the synagogue of Nazareth was moved against Christ, and so fulfilled with ire towards him for his preaching, that the men of the synagogue rose up and cast Christ out of their city, and led him up to the top of a mountain to cast him down there headlong. Also accordingly hereto the Lord witnesseth by Moses, that he shall put dissension betwixt his people, and the people that contrary and pursue his people. Who, sir, is he that shall preach the truth of

God's word to the unfaithful people, and shall hinder the truth of the gospel, and the prophecy of God almighty to be fulfilled?

And the archbishop said to me, It follows of these thy words, that thou and such other, think that you do right well to preach and teach as you do, without authority of any bishop.* For you presume that the Lord hath chosen you only to preach, as faithful disciples and especial followers of Christ.

I said, Sir, by authority of God's law, and also of saints and doctors, I am taught to consider, that it is every priest's office and duty to preach busily, freely, and truly, the word of God. For no doubt every priest should purpose first in his soul, and covet to take the order of priesthood, chiefly to make known to the people the word of God, after his judgment and power; approving his words ever to be true by his virtuous works. And for this intent we suppose that bishops and other prelates of holy church should chiefly take and use their prelacy, and for the same cause bishops should give to priests their orders. For bishops should accept no man to priesthood, except that he had good will and full purpose, and were well disposed, and well learned to preach. Wherefore, sir, by the bidding of Christ, and by the example of his most holy living, and also by the witnessing of his holy apostles and prophets, we are bound, under full great pain, to exercise us after our judgment and power, as every priest is likewise charged of God, to fulfil duly the office of priesthood. We presume not here of ourselves to be esteemed, either in our own reputation, or in any other man's, faithful disciples, and especial followers of Christ. But, sir, as I said to you before, we deem this by authority chiefly of God's word, that it is the chief duty of every priest to busy him faithfully to make the law of God known to his people; and so to commune the commandment of God charitably, how that we may best, where, when, and to whom that ever we may, is our very duty. And for the will and business that we owe of due debt, to do justly our office through the stirring and especial help, as we trust, of God, hoping steadfastly in his mercy, we desire to be the faithful disciples of Christ; and we pray this gracious Lord for his holy name, that he make us able to please him with

* In the constitutions of archbishop Arundel, made by him about this time, and sanctioned by the convocation, A. D. 1408, it was ordered that none of the clergy should preach without a bishop's license. The mendicant orders, however, were privileged to preach without episcopal sanction.

devout prayers, and charitable priestly works, that we may obtain of him to follow him thankfully.

The archbishop said to me, Lewd losel, whereto maketh thou such vain reasons to me? Asketh not St. Paul, how should priests preach except they be sent? But I never sent thee to preach. For thy venomous doctrine is so known throughout England, that no bishop will admit thee to preach by witnessing of their letters. Why, then, lewd idiot, wilt thou presume to preach, since thou art not sent, nor licensed of thy sovereign to preach? St. Paul saith, that subjects ought to obey their sovereigns, and not only good and virtuous, but also tyrants that are vicious.

And I said to the archbishop, Sir, as touching your letter of licence, or other bishop's, which, you say, we should have to witness that we are able to be sent to preach, we know well that neither you, sir, nor any other bishop of this land will grant to us any such letters of license, unless we should oblige us to you, and to other bishops, by unlawful oaths, not to pass the bounds and terms which ye, sir, or other bishops, will limit to us. And since in this matter your terms are some too large, and some too strait, we dare not oblige us thus to be bounden to you to keep the terms, which you will limit to us, as you do to friars and such other preachers. And therefore, though we have not your letter, sir, nor letters of any other bishops written with ink upon parchment, we dare not therefore leave the office of preaching; to which preaching all priests after their skill and power are bound, by divers testimonies of God's law, and great doctors, without any mention making of bishops' letters. Forasmuch as we have taken upon us the office of priesthood, though we are unworthy thereto, we came and purpose to fulfil it, with the help of God, by authority of his own law, and by witness of great doctors and saints, accordingly hereto trusting steadfastly in the mercy of God. For that he commandeth us to do the office of priesthood, he will be our sufficient letters and witness, if we by example of his holy living and teaching, especially occupy us faithfully to do our office justly. Yea, the people to whom we preach, be they faithful or unfaithful, shall be our letters, that is, our witness-bearers; for the truth where it is sown may not be unwitnessed. For all that are converted and saved by learning of God's word, and by working thereafter, are witness-bearers, that the truth and verity, which they heard and did after, is cause of their salvation. And

again, all unfaithful men and women which heard the truth told out to them, and would not do thereafter—also all they that might have heard the truth, and would not hear it, because that they would not do thereafter; all these shall bear witness against themselves. And the truth which they would not hear, or else heard it, and despised to do thereafter through their unfaithfulness, is and shall be cause of their damnation. Therefore, sir, since this aforesaid witnessing of God, and of divers saints and doctors, and of all the people, good and evil, suffices to all true preachers, we think that we do not the office of priesthood, if we leave our preaching, because that we have not, or may not have duly bishops' letters, to witness that we are sent of them to preach. This sentence St. Paul approves, where he speaks of himself and of faithful apostles and disciples; saying thus; We need no letters of commendation as some preachers do, which preach for covetousness of temporal goods, and for men's praising. And where you say, sir, that Paul bids subjects obey their sovereigns, that is truth, and may not be denied. But there are two manner of sovereigns—virtuous sovereigns, and vicious tyrants. Therefore to these last sovereigns neither men nor women, that are subject, owe to obey in two manners. To virtuous and charitable sovereigns subjects owe to obey willingly and gladly, in hearing of their good counsel, in consenting to their charitable biddings, and in working after their fruitful works.

This sentence Paul approves, where he saith to subjects, Be ye mindful of your sovereigns, that speak to you the word of God, and follow the faith of them, whose conversation you know to be virtuous. For, as Paul saith after, these sovereigns to whom subjects ought to obey in following of their manners, work busily in holy studying, how they may withstand and destroy vices, first in themselves and after in all their subjects, and how they may best plant in them virtues. Also these sovereigns make devout and fervent prayers to purchase grace of God, that they and their subjects may over all things dread to offend him, and love to please him. Also these sovereigns to whom Paul bids us obey, as it is said before, live so virtuously, that all they that will live well, may take of them good example, to know and to keep the commandments of God. But in this aforesaid manner, subjects ought not to obey nor to be obedient to tyrants, while they are vicious tyrants, since

their will, their counsel, their biddings, and their works are so vicious, that they ought to be hated and left. And though such tyrants are masterful and cruel in boasting and menacing; in oppressions and divers punishings; St. Peter bids the servants of such tyrants, to obey meekly such tyrants, suffering patiently their malicious cruelties. But Peter counsels not any servant or subject to obey any lord, or prince, or sovereign, in any thing that is not pleasing to God.

And the archbishop said, If a sovereign bid his subject do that thing that is vicious, this sovereign herein is to blame; but the subject for his obedience deserveth reward of God. For obedience more pleases God, than any sacrifice.

I said, Samuel the prophet said to Saul the wicked king, that God was more pleased with the obedience of his commandments, than with any sacrifice of beasts. But David saith, and St. Paul and St. Gregory accordingly together, that not only they that do evil are worthy of death and damnation, but also they that consent to evil doers. And, sir, the law of the holy church teaches in the decrees, that no servant to his lord, nor child to the father or mother, nor wife to her husband, nor monk to his abbot, ought to obey, except in allowable things, and lawful.

The archbishop said to me, All these allegings that thou bringest forth, are nothing else but proud presumptuousness. For hereby thou enforcest thee to prove, that thou and such other are so just, that ye ought not to obey to prelates. And thus against the learning of St. Paul, who teaches you not to preach unless you were sent, of your own authority, ye will go forth and preach, and do what ye list.

I said, Sir, represents not every priest the office of the apostles, or the office of the disciples of Christ? And the archbishop said, Yea. And I said, Sir, as the tenth chapter of Matthew, and the last chapter of Mark witness, Christ sent his apostles to preach. And the tenth chapter of Luke witnesses, that Christ sent seventy disciples two and two, to preach in every place that he was to come to. And St. Gregory in the common law saith, that every man who goeth into the priesthood, takes upon him the office of preaching; for as he saith, That priest stirreth God to great wrath, of whose mouth is not heard the voice of preaching. And as other more glosses upon Ezekiel witness, the priest

who preaches not busily to the people, shall be partaker of their damnation who perish through his default. And though the people are saved by other especial grace of God, than by the priests' preaching, yet the priests, in that they are ordained to preach, and preach not, in the sight of God they are manslayers. For as far as in them is, such priests as preach not busily and truly, slay all the people spiritually, in that they withhold from them the word of God, which is the life and sustenance of men's souls. And St. Isidore said, priests shall be damned for wickedness of the people, if they teach not them that are ignorant, or blame not them that are sinners. For all the work or business of priests stands in preaching and teaching, that they edify all men as well by knowledge of faith, as by discipline of works, that is, virtuous teaching. And as the gospel witnesses, Christ said in his teaching, I am born and come into this world, to bear witness to the truth, and he that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Then, sir, since by the word of Christ especially, that is, by his voice, priests are commanded to preach; whatsoever priest it be, that hath not good will and full purpose to do thus, and enables not himself after his cunning and power to do his office by the example of Christ and of his apostles, whatsoever other thing he doth, displeases God. For lo, St. Gregory saith, that thing left which a man is bound chiefly to do, whatsoever other thing a man doth, it is unthankful to the Holy Ghost; and therefore saith Lincoln,* "The priest that preaches not the word of God, though he be seen to have none other default, he is antichrist and satan, a night thief, and a day thief, a slayer of souls, and an angel of light turned into darkness." Wherefore, sir, these authorities and others well considered, I deem myself condemnable, if I either for pleasure or displeasure of any creature, apply me not diligently to preach the word of God. And in the same condemnation I deem all those priests, who of good purpose and will, enforce themselves not busily to do thus, and also all them that have purpose or will to hinder any priest of this business.

And the archbishop said to those three clerks that stood before him, Lo, sirs, this is the manner and business of this losel and such others, to pick out such sharp sentences

* Grosthead, bishop of Lincoln, who lived in the preceding century, and opposed the Romish corruptions.—*See History of the Church of Christ.*

of holy scripture and doctors, to maintain their sect and lore against the ordinance of holy church. And therefore, losel, it is thou that covetest to have again the psalter that I made to be taken from thee at Canterbury, to record* sharp verses against us. But thou shalt never have that psalter nor any other book, till that I know that thy heart and thy mouth accord fully to be governed by holy church.

I said, Sir, all my will and power is, and ever shall be, I trust to God, to be governed by holy church.

The archbishop asked me, what was holy church.

I said, Sir, I told you before what was holy church. But, since ye ask me this demand, I call Christ and his saints holy church.

And the archbishop said unto me, I wot well that Christ and his saints are holy church in heaven, but what is holy church in earth?

I said, Sir, though holy church be every one in charity, yet it hath two parts. The first and principal part hath perfectly overcome all the wretchedness of this life, and reigneth joyfully in heaven with Christ. And the other part is here yet in earth, busily and continually fighting day and night against temptations of the fiend; forsaking and hating the prosperity of this world, despising and withstanding their fleshly lusts; which only are the pilgrims of Christ, wandering toward heaven by steadfast faith, and grounded hope, and by perfect charity. For these heavenly pilgrims may not, and will not be hindered of their good purpose, by the reason of any doctors discording from holy scripture, nor by the floods of any temporal tribulation, nor by the wind of any pride, of boast, or of menacing of any creature. For they are all fast grounded upon the sure stone Christ, hearing his word and loving it, exercising them faithfully and continually in all their judgment to do thereafter.

The archbishop said to his clerks, See ye not how his heart is indurate, and how he is travailed with the devil, occupying him thus busily to allege such sentences to maintain his errors and heresies. Certain, thus he would occupy us here all day, if we would suffer him.

One of the clerks answered, Sir, he said just now, that this certification, which came to you from Shrewsbury, is untruly forged against him. Therefore, sir, appose you him now here in all the points which are certified against him,

* Repeat.

and so we shall hear of his own mouth his answers, and witness them.

And the archbishop took the certification in his hand, and looked thereon a while, and then he said to me, Lo here it is certified against thee by worthy men and faithful of Shrewsbury, that thou preachedst there openly in St. Chad's church, that the sacrament of the altar is material bread after the consecration, what sayest thou? Was this truly preached?

I said, Sir, I tell you truly that I touched nothing there of the sacrament of the altar, but in this wise as I will with God's grace tell you here. As I stood there in the pulpit, busying me to teach the commandment of God, there knelled a sacring bell,* and therefore much people turned away hastily, and with noise ran from me. And I, seeing this, said to them thus, Good men, ye were better to stand here still and to hear God's word. For certainly the virtue and the meed of the most holy sacrament of the altar standeth much more in the belief thereof, that you ought to have in your soul, than it doth in the outward sight thereof. And therefore, you were better to stand still quietly to hear God's word, because through the hearing thereof, men come to very true belief. And otherwise, sir, I am certain I spake not there of the worthy sacrament of the altar.

And the archbishop said, I believe thee not, whatsoever thou sayest, since such worshipful men have witnessed thus against thee. But since thou deniest that thou saidst thus there, what sayest thou now? Resteth there after the consecration in the host, material bread or no?†

I said, Sir, I know in no place in holy scripture where this term material bread is written; and therefore, sir, when I speak of this matter, I use not to speak of material bread.

Then the archbishop said, How teachest thou men to believe in this sacrament?

I said, Sir, as I believe myself, so I teach other men.

He said, Tell out plainly thy belief thereof.

I said, with my protestation, Sir, I believe that the night before that Christ Jesus would suffer, willingly, his passion for mankind on the morning after, he took bread in his holy and most worshipful hands, lifting up his eyes and giving

* A bell rung at the mass.

† From the days of Wickliff to the reign of queen Mary, this was made the test to discover heretics. The reader will remember that the doctrine of transubstantiation is a main support of the fabric of error reared by the church of Rome.

thanks to God his Father, he blessed this bread, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying to them, Take and eat of this all you, this is my body. And that this is and ought to be all men's belief, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul witness. Other belief, sir, I have none, nor will have, nor teach; for I believe, that this suffices in this matter. For in this belief, with God's grace, I purpose to live and die, acknowledging as I believe and teach other men to believe, that the worshipful sacrament of the altar is the sacrament of Christ's flesh and his blood in the form of bread and wine.

And the archbishop said, It is truth that this sacrament is very Christ's body in form of bread. But thou and thy sect teach it to be substance of bread. Think you this true teaching?

I said, Neither I, nor any other of the sect that ye condemn, teach any otherwise than I have told you, nor believe otherwise to my knowing. Nevertheless, sir, I ask of you for charity, that you will tell me here plainly, how you shall understand the text of St. Paul, where he saith thus, This thing feel you in yourself that is in Christ Jesus, while he was in the form of God. Sir, calleth not Paul here the form of God, the substance or kind of God? Also, sir, saith not the church in the hours of the most blessed virgin* accordingly hereto, where it is written thus, Thou author of health remember, that sometime thou took of the undefiled virgin the form of our body? Tell me for charity therefore, whether the form of our bodies be called here the kind of our body or no?

And the archbishop said, Wouldest thou make me to declare this text after thy purpose, since the church now hath determined, that there abideth no substance of bread, after the consecration, in the sacrament of the altar? Believest thou not this ordinance of the church?†

I said, Sir, whatsoever prelates have ordained in the church, our belief standeth ever whole. I have not heard, that the ordinance of men under belief ‡ should be put into belief.

And the archbishop said, If thou hast not learned this

* The service of the virgin. A devotional book used in the church of Rome.

† The papists have none other defence for them, but only the church. Every ordinance of churchmen bindeth not our faith.—*Fox.*

‡ "Under belief," refers to those whose duty it is rather to believe what is taught, than to devise matter for others to believe.

before, learn now to know that thou art out of belief, if in this matter and other thou believest not as the holy church believe. What say doctors treating of this sacrament?

I said, Sir, St. Paul, who was a great doctor of holy church, speaking to the people, and teaching them in the right belief of this most holy sacrament, calleth it bread that we break. And also in the canon of the mass, after the consecration, this most worthy sacrament is called holy bread. And every priest in this land, after that he hath received this sacrament, saith thus, That thing which we have taken with our mouth, we pray God that we may take it with a pure and clean mind. That is, as I understand, we pray God that we may receive, through very belief, this holy sacrament worthily. And, sir, St. Augustine saith, "That which is seen is bread; but that which men's faith asketh to be informed of is very Christ's body." And also Fulgence, an ententive* doctor, saith, "As it were an error to say that Christ was but a substance, that is, very man, and not very God; or to say that Christ was very God, and not very man: so is it, this doctor saith, an error to say, that the sacrament of the altar is but a substance;" and also, sir, accordingly hereto, in the secret† of the mid mass on Christmas-day, it is written thus, Idem refulsit Deus, sic terrena substantia nobis conferat quod divinum est; which sentence, sir, with the secret of the fourth ferie, (feria quarta) quatuor temporum Septembris, I pray you, sir, declare here openly in English.‡

And the archbishop said, I perceive well enough whereabout thou art, and how the devil blindeth thee, that thou mayest not understand the ordinance of holy church, nor consent thereto. But I command thee now, answer me shortly; Believest thou, that, after the consecration of this aforesaid sacrament, there abideth substance of bread, or not?

I said, Sir, as I understand, it is all one to grant or believe that there dwelleth substance of bread, and to grant and to believe, that this most worthy sacrament of Christ's own body is accident without subject. But, sir, forasmuch

* Earnest, attentive. Fulgentius lived in the sixth century. He wrote against the Arians and Pelagians.

† The secret of the mass is a prayer, said by the priest privately to himself, during that service; it is stated to signify the private discourse of our Lord with his disciples.

‡ God is manifested therein, thus a terrene (or earthly) substance imparts to us that which is divine. The service referred to is in the ember week in September.

as your asking passeth my understanding, I dare neither deny it, nor grant it;* for it is school matter, about which I never busied me to know; and therefore I commit this term, accident without subject, to those clerks who delight them so in curious and subtle sophistry, because they determine oft such difficult and strange matters, and wade and wander so in them from argument to argument, with for and against, till they know not where they are, and understand not themselves. But the shame that these proud sophisters have to yield them to men, and before men, oft makes them fools, and to be concluded shamefully before God.

The archbishop said, I purpose not to oblige thee to the subtle arguments of clerks, since thou art unable thereto; but I purpose to make thee obey to the determination of holy church.

I said, Sir, by open evidence and great witness, a thousand years after the incarnation of Christ, the determination, which I have here before you rehearsed, was accepted of holy church as sufficient for the salvation of all them that would believe it faithfully, and work thereafter charitably. But, sir, the determination of this matter was brought in, since the fiend was loosed, by friar Thomas, again,† especially calling the most worshipful sacrament of Christ's own body, an accident without subject; which term, since I know not that God's law approves it in this matter, I dare not grant, but utterly I deny to make this friar's sentence, or any such other, my belief; do with me, God, what thou wilt.

The archbishop said, Well, well, thou shalt say otherwise ere I leave you. But what sayest thou to this second point that is recorded against thee by worthy men of Shrewsbury, saying, that thou preachedst there, that images ought not to be worshipped in anywise?

I said, Sir, I never preached thus, nor, through God's grace, will I at any time consent to think, or to say thus, either privily or openly. For lo, the Lord witnesseth by Moses, that the things which he made were right good, and

* To grant the real being of the body without bread, is as much as to grant the accident to be without the subject.—*Fox.* The Lollards usually adopted the plan of keeping merely to the words of scripture, when examined respecting the mass, and avoided entering into discussions upon the subject.

† The friar here referred to is Thomas Aquinas, whose writings were a main support of the doctrine of transubstantiation. The loosing "again," refers to the belief then general among the opposers of the papacy, that Satan had been bound the first thousand years after Christ, but was then loosed, Rev. xx. 1—3. See Wickliff, p. 32. 47.

so then they were, and yet they are and shall be good and worshipful in their kind. And therefore, to the end that God made them to, they are all praiseable and worshipful, and especially man, that was made after the image and likeness of God, is full worshipful* in his kind, yea, this holy image, that is man, God worshippeth. And therefore every man should worship other, in kind, and also for heavenly virtues that men use charitably. And also I say, wood, tin, gold, silver, or any other matter that images are made of, all these creatures are worshipful in their kind, and to the end that God made them for. But the carving, casting, and painting of an imagery, made within man's hand, albeit this doing be accepted of men of highest state and dignity, and ordained of them to be a calendar to unlearned men, who neither can, nor will be learned to know God in his word, neither by his creatures, nor by his wonderful and divers workings; yet this imagery ought not to be worshipped in form, nor in the likeness of man's craft. Nevertheless, that every matter the painters paint with, since it is God's creature, ought to be worshipped† in the kind, and to that end that God made and ordained it to serve man.‡

Then the archbishop said to me, I grant well that nobody ought to do worship to any such images for themselves. But a crucifix ought to be worshipped for the passion of Christ that is painted therein, and so brought thereby to man's mind; and thus the images of the blessed Trinity, and of the virgin Mary, Christ's mother, and other images of saints ought to be worshipped. For lo, earthly kings and lords who use to send their letters sealed with their arms, or with their privy signet to them that are with them, are worshipped of these men. For when these men receive their lords' letters, in which they see and know the wills and biddings of the lords, in worship of their lords, they do off their caps to these letters. Why not then, since in images made with man's hand, we may read and know many, and divers things of God, and of his saints; shall we not worship their images?

I said, With my aforesaid protestation I say, that these worldly usages of temporal laws that ye speak now of, may be done in some cases without sin. But this is no similitude

* To be reverenced or respected. † Respected.

‡ Though man accept the painting or carving of images, yet is it not the right way to learn to serve God.—*Fox.*

to worship images, made by man's hand; since that Moses, David, Solomon, and other saints in the bible forbid so plainly the worshipping of all such images.

Then the archbishop said, Lewd losel, in the old law before that Christ took mankind, was no likeness of any person of the Trinity, neither showed to man, nor known of man. But now since Christ became man, it is lawful to have images to show this manhood, yea, though many men who are right great clerks, and others also, held it an error to paint the Trinity; I say, it is well done to make and to paint the Trinity in images. For it is great moving of devotion to men, to have and to behold the Trinity and other images of saints carved, cast, and painted. For beyond the sea are the best painters that ever I saw. And, sirs, I tell you, this is their manner, and it is a good manner— When an image-maker shall carve, cast in mould, or paint any images, he shall go to a priest, and shrive him as clean, as if he should then die; and take penance, and make some certain vow of fasting or of praying, or pilgrimages doing, praying the priest especially to pray for him, that he may have grace to make a fair and a devout image.

I said, Sir, I doubt not if these painters that ye speak of, or any other painters, understood truly the text of Moses, of David, of the wise man, of Baruch, and of other saints and doctors; these painters should be moved to shrive them to God with full inward sorrow of heart, taking upon them to do right sharp penance for the sinful and vain craft of painting, carving, or casting they had used; promising God faithfully never to do so after; acknowledging openly before all men their reprovable learning. And also, sir, these priests that shrive, as you do say, painters, and enjoin them to do penance, and pray for their speed, promising to them help of their prayers to be curious in their sinful crafts, sin herein more grievously than the painters. For these priests do comfort and give them counsel to do that thing, which of great pain, yea under the pain of God's curse, they should utterly forbid them. For certainly, sir, if the wonderful working of God, and the holy living and teaching of Christ, and of his apostles and prophets, were made known to the people by holy living, and true and busy teaching of priests; these things, sir, were sufficient books and calendars to know God by, and his saints, without any images made with man's hand. But certainly, the vicious living of priests and their covetousness, are chief

cause of this error; and all other viciousness that reigneth among the people.

Then the archbishop said, I hold thee a vicious priest and accursed, and all they that are of thy sect; for all priests of holy church, and all images that move men to devotion, thou and such other go about to destroy. Losel, were it a fair thing to come into the church, and see therein none image?*

I said, Sir, they that come to the church, to pray devoutly to the Lord God, may in their inward mind be the more fervent, that all their outward senses be closed from all outward seeing and hearing, and from all disturbance and lettings. And since Christ blessed them that saw him not bodily, and have believed faithfully in him; it suffices then to all men, through hearing and knowing God's word, and doing thereafter, to believe in God, though they never see images made with man's hand, after any person of the Trinity, or of any other saint.

And the archbishop said to me with a fervent spirit, I say to thee, losel, that it is right well done to make and to have an image of the Trinity; yea, what sayest thou? is it not a stirring thing to behold such an image?

I said, Sir, you said right now that in the old law, ere Christ took mankind, no likeness of any person of the Trinity was showed to men; wherefore, sir, you said it was not then lawful to have images; but now you say, since Christ is become man, it is lawful to have and to make an image of the Trinity, and also of other saints. But, sir, this thing would I learn of you—since the Father of heaven, yea and every person of the Trinity, was without beginning God almighty, and many holy prophets who were mortal men, were martyred violently in the old law, and also many men and women then died confessors—Why was it not then as lawful and necessary as now, to have made an image of the Father of heaven, and to have made and had other images of martyrs, prophets, and holy confessors, to have been calendars to advise men and move them to devotion, as ye say that images now do?

The archbishop said, The synagogue of the Jews had not authority to approve those things, as the church of Christ hath now.

I said, Sir, St. Gregory was a great man in the new law, and

* A better sight, my lord, than to see blind stocks there to be worshipped.—*Fox.*

of great dignity, and, as the common law witnesses, he commended greatly a bishop, in that he forbad utterly that the images made with man's hand should be worshipped.

The archbishop said, Ungracious losel, thou savourest no more truth than a hound. Since at the rood at the north door at London, at our lady at Walsingham, and many other places in England, are many great and praisable miracles done; should not the images of such holy saints and places at the reverence of God, and of our lady, and other saints, be more worshipped than other places and images, where no such miracles are done?

I said, Sir, there is no such virtue in any imagery, that any image should heretofore be worshipped; wherefore I am certain that there is no miracle done of God in any place in earth, because that any images made with man's hand should be worshipped. And therefore, sir, as I preached openly at Shrewsbury and other places, I say now here before you, that nobody should trust that there were any virtue in imagery made with man's hand; and therefore nobody should vow to them, nor seek them, nor kneel to them, nor bow to them, nor pray to them, nor offer any thing to them, nor kiss them, nor incense them.* For lo the most worthy of such images, the brazen serpent made by Moses at God's bidding, the good king Hezekiah destroyed worthily and thankfully, and all because it was incensed. Therefore, sir, if men take good heed to the writing and the learning of St. Augustine, of St. Gregory, and of St. John Chrysostom, and of other saints and doctors, how they spake and wrote of miracles, that shall be done now in the last end of the world. It is to be feared, that for the unfaithfulness of men and women, the fiend hath great power to work many of the miracles that now are done in such places. For both men and women delight now, more to hear and know miracles, than they do to know God's word, or to hear it effectually. Wherefore, to the great confusion of all them that do thus, Christ saith, the generation of adulterers require tokens, miracles, and wonders. Nevertheless, as divers saints say, now when the faith of God is published in christendom, the word of God suffices to man's salvation, without such miracles; and thus also the word of God suffices to all faithful men and women without any such images. But, good sir, since the Father of heaven, that is God in his Godhead, is the most unknown thing

* Burn incense before them.

that may be, and the most wonderful Spirit, having in it no shape nor likeness, and members of any mortal creature; in what likeness or what image may God the Father be showed or painted.*

The archbishop said, As holy church hath suffered the images of the Trinity, and all other images to be painted and showed; it sufficeth to them that are members of holy church.† But since thou art a rotten member, cut away from holy church, thou favourest not the ordinance thereof. But, since the day passes, leave we this matter.

Then he said to me, What sayest thou to the third point that is certified against thee, preaching openly in Shrewsbury, that pilgrimage is not lawful? And beside this thou saidst that those men and women that go on pilgrimages to Canterbury, to Beverley, to Karlington, to Walsingham, and to any other such places, are accursed and made foolish, spending their goods in waste.

I said, Sir, by this certification I am accused to you that I should teach, that no pilgrimage is lawful. But I said never thus. For I know that there are true and lawful pilgrimages, and full pleasant to God; and therefore, sir, howsoever mine enemies have certified you of me, I told at Shrewsbury of two manner of pilgrimages.

And the archbishop said to me, Whom callest thou true pilgrims?

I said, Sir, with my protestation, I call them true pilgrims travelling toward the bliss of heaven, who in the state, degree, or order that God calls them to, busy themselves faithfully to occupy all their judgment bodily and ghostly, to know truly, and to keep faithfully, the biddings of God, hating and fleeing all the seven deadly sins, and every branch of them. Ruling themselves virtuously, as it is said before, with all their abilities; doing discreetly, willingly, and gladly, all the works of mercy, bodily and ghostly, after their knowledge and power, abling them to the gifts of the Holy Ghost, disposing them to receive them in their souls, and to hold therein the right blessings of Christ, busying them to know and to keep the seven principal virtues, and so then they shall obtain herethrough grace, to use thankfully to God all the conditions of charity. And

* Many of these blasphemous representations are to be seen in missals, and even in some printed books of Romish devotion. One of them is copied in Lewis's life of Pecock.

† Holy church of your own building.—*Fox.*

then they shall be moved with the good Spirit of God, to examine oft and diligently their conscience, that neither wilfully nor wittingly they err in any article of belief, having continually, as frailty will suffer, all their business, to dread and to fly the offence of God, and to love over all, and to seek ever to do his pleasant will. Of these pilgrimages I said, whatsoever good thought they at any time think, what virtuous word they speak, and what fruitful work they work—every such thought, word, and work is a step numbered of God towards himself into heaven. These aforesaid pilgrims of God, delight greatly when they hear of saints or of virtuous men and women, how they forsook willingly the prosperity of this life, how they withstood the suggestion of the fiend, how they restrained their fleshly lusts, how discreet they were in their penance doing, how patient they were in all their adversities, how prudent they were in counselling of men and women, moving them to hate all sins, and to fly them, and to shame ever greatly thereof, and to love all virtues, and to draw to them, imagining how Christ and his followers by example of him suffered scorns and slanders, and how patiently they abode and took the wrongful menacing of tyrants; how homely* they were, and serviceable to poor men to relieve and comfort them bodily and ghostly, after their power and skill, and how devout they were in prayers; how fervent they were in heavenly desires, and how they absented themselves from spectacles of vain sayings and hearings, and how stable they were to prevent and destroy all vices, and how laborious and joyful they were to sow and to plant virtues? These heavenly conditions and such others have pilgrims, or endeavour to have them, whose pilgrimage God accepteth.

And again, I said, as their works show, the most part of men and women, that go now on pilgrimages, have not these aforesaid conditions, nor love to busy them faithfully to have them. For as I well know, since I have full oft assayed, examine whosoever will twenty of these pilgrims, and he shall not find three men or women that know surely a commandment of God, nor can say their paternoster and ave maria, nor their creed readily in any manner of language.† And as I have learned and also know somewhat

* Friendly.

† Dr. Wordsworth gives the following extract from a book called "Dialogue or Familiar Talk," printed in 1554. "Twenty years ago who could say the Lord's prayer in English? Who could tell any one

by experience of these same pilgrims, telling the cause why many men and women go hither and thither now on pilgrimage, it is more for the health of their bodies, than of their souls; more to have riches and prosperity of this world, than to be enriched with virtues in their souls; more to have here worldly and fleshly friendship, than to have friendship of God, and of his saints in heaven. For whatsoever man or woman doth, the friendship of God, or of any saint, cannot be had, without keeping of God's commandments. Further with my protestation, I say now, as I said in Shrewsbury, though they that have fleshly wills, travel far their bodies, and spend much money, to seek and to visit the bones or images, as they say they do, of this saint or of that; such pilgrimage going is neither praisable nor thankful to God nor to any saint of God, since in effect all such pilgrims despise God and all his commandments and saints. For the commandments of God they will neither know, nor keep, nor conform them to live virtuously by example of Christ and of his saints. Wherefore, sir, I have preached and taught openly, and so I purpose all my lifetime to do, with God's help, saying that such foolish people waste blamefully God's goods in their vain pilgrimages, spending their goods upon vicious hostelers,* which are oft unclean women; and at the least, those goods with which they should do works of mercy, after God's bidding, to poor needy men and women.

These poor men's goods and their livelihood, these runners about offer to rich priests, who have much more livelihood than they need. And thus those goods they waste wilfully, and spend them unjustly, against God's bidding, upon strangers, with which they should help and relieve according to God's will their poor needy neighbours at home. Yea, and over this folly, oftentimes divers men and women, of these runners thus madly hither and thither into pilgrimage, borrow hereto other men's goods; yea, and sometimes they steal men's goods hereto, and they pay them never again! Also, sir, I know well that when divers men

article of his faith? Who had once heard of any of the ten commandments? Who knew what catechism meant? Who understood any point of holy baptism? If we were sick of the pestilence, we ran to St. Rook, if of the ague to St. Pernel, or master John Shorne. If men were in prison they prayed to St. Leonard. If the Welchman would have a purse, he prayed to Darvel Gathorne. If a wife were weary of her husband, she offered oats at Paul's in London to St. Uncumber."

* Persons who kept inns or houses to receive travellers.

and women will go thus after their own wills, and finding out, on pilgrimage; they will ordain with them before, to have with them both men and women, that can well sing wanton songs, and some other pilgrims will have with them bagpipes. So that every town that they come through, what with the noise of their singing, and with the sound of their piping, and with the jangling of their Canterbury bells, and with the barking out of dogs after them, they make more noise, than if the king came there away with all his clarions, and many other minstrels. And if these men and women are a month out in their pilgrimage, many of them shall be half a year after great janglers, tale-tellers, and liars.*

The archbishop said to me, Lewd losel, thou seest not far enough in this matter, for thou considerest not the great travel of pilgrims, therefore thou blamest that thing which is praisable. I say to thee, that is right well done, that pilgrims have with them both singers and also pipers, that when one of them that goeth barefoot striketh his toe upon a stone, and hurteth him sore, and maketh him to bleed, it is well done that he or his fellow begin then a song ;† or else take out of his bosom a bagpipe, to drive away with such mirth the hurt of his fellow. For with such solace the travel and weariness of pilgrims is lightly and merrily borne out.

I said, St. Paul teaches men to weep with them that weep.

And the archbishop said, What! janglest thou against men's devotion? Whatsoever thou or such other say, I say that the pilgrimage that now is used, is to them that do it a praisable and a good mean to come the rather to grace.‡

* Thus the host in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales says, "Truly comfort and mirth is there none, To ride by the way as dumb as a stone." And the author of Piers Ploughman's visions, describing some pilgrims, says, "They went forth their way with many wise tales, And had leave to lie all their life after." In the Salisbury ritual there is a regular service or form of benediction for the pilgrims, their scrips and staves, previously to their going on pilgrimage, with a prayer that they might deserve to come to the joys of the eternal mansion. The follies and vices resulting from these pilgrimages are well exposed by Erasmus, in his dialogue Peregrinatio Religionis ergo. He therein describes the shrine of the virgin at Walsingham in Norfolk.

† Why then blamed Bonner Philpot for singing in the stocks?—*Fox.*

‡ Archbishop Sudbury, predecessor to Arundel, had a more scriptural idea respecting pilgrimages. In 1381, meeting a great many pilgrims on their way to Thomas à Becket's shrine, he told them that the plenary indulgence they hoped for at Canterbury was of no profit or value. Some were amazed at such a declaration, others openly imprecated curses upon him, and wished he might die a shameful death for saying so. A few months after, he was slain by the Kentish rebels, and his death was considered as a judgment for this declaration.

But I hold thee unable to know this grace, for thou enforcest thee to hinder the devotion of the people; since by authority of holy scripture, men may lawfully have and use such solace as thou reprovest. For David, in his last psalm, teacheth men to have divers instruments of music to praise God therewith.

I said, Sir, by the sentence of divers doctors expounding the psalms of David, that music and minstrelsy which David and other saints of the old law spake of, ought now neither to be taken nor used by the letter, but these instruments with their music ought to be interpreted spiritually; for all those figures are called virtues and grace, with which virtues men should please God, and praise his name. For St. Paul saith, all such things befell to them in figure. Therefore, sir, I understand, that the letter of this psalm of David, and of such other psalms and sentences, slay them that take them now literally. This sentence, as I understand, sir, Christ himself approved, putting out the minstrels, when he would quicken the dead damsel, Matt. ix.

And the archbishop said to me, Lewd losel, is it not lawful to us to have organs in the church to worship therewithal God? And I said, Yea, sir, by man's ordinance; but by the ordinance of God, a good sermon, to the people's understanding, were much more pleasant to God.

The archbishop said, that organs and good delectable songs quickened and sharpened men's wits more than should any sermon.*

But I said, Sir, lusty men and worldly lovers, delight, and covet, and travail, to have all their wits quickened and sharpened with divers sensible solaces. But all the faithful lovers and followers of Christ, have all their delight to hear God's word, and to understand it truly, and to work thereafter faithfully and continually. For no doubt, to dread to offend God, and to love to please him in all things, quickeneth and sharpeneth all the powers of Christ's chosen people; and enableth them so to grace, that they joy greatly to withdraw their ears and all their understanding and members from all worldly delight, and from all fleshly solace. For St. Jerome, as I think, saith, Nobody may joy with this world and reign with Christ.

* Instrumental and artificial music had then been introduced into divine service, so as to do away proper devotional feeling. Erasmus complained of this in his annotations, 1 Cor. xiv. Even the Council of Trent censured the curious and artificial singing then prevalent. Wickliff wrote against it in strong terms.

And the archbishop, as if he had been displeased with my answer, said to his clerks, What guess ye that this idiot will speak there where he hath no dread; since he speaks thus now here in my presence? Well, well, by ——, thou shalt be ordained for. And then he spake to me all angrily, What sayest thou to this fourth point, that is certified against thee, preaching openly and boldly in Shrewsbury, that priests have no title to tithes?

And I said, Sir, I named there no word of tithes in my preaching. But more than a month after I was arrested there in prison, a man came to me into the prison, asking me what I said of tithes? And I said to him, Sir, in this town are many clerks and priests, of whom some are called religious men, though many of them are seculars; therefore ask ye of them this question. And this man said to me, Sir, our prelates say, that we also are obliged to pay our tithes of all things that come to us; and that they are accursed who withdraw any part designedly from them of their tithes. And I said, sir, to that man, as with my protestation I say now before you, that I wonder that any priest dare say men are accursed, without the ground of God's word. And the man said, sir, Our priests say, that they curse men thus by the authority of God's law. And I said, Sir, I know not where this sentence of cursing is authorized now in the bible. And therefore, sir, I pray you that you will ask the wisest clerk of this town, that ye may know where this sentence of cursing them that tithe not, is now written in God's law.* For if it were written there, I would right gladly be learned where. But shortly, this man would not go from me to ask this question of any other body, but required me there, as I would answer before God, if in this case that cursing of priests were lawful and approved of God? And shortly herewith came to my mind the learning of St. Peter, teaching priests especially to hallow the Lord Christ in their hearts; being evermore ready, as far as in them is, to answer through faith and hope to them that ask of them a reason. And this lesson Peter teaches men to use with a meek spirit, and with dread of the Lord. Wherefore, sir, I said to this man in this wise,

* The general sentence of the curse, which was read four times a year, included, "also all those that for malice or wrath of (against) parson, vicar, or priest, or of any other, or for wrongful covetousness of himself, withholds rightful tithes and offerings, rents or mortuaries, from their own parish church."—*Becon's Reliques of Rome*, 12mo. ed. Fo. 247. See also Chaucer's Jack Upland.

In the old law, which ended not fully till the time that Christ rose up again from death to life, God commanded tithes to be given to the levites, for the great business and daily travail that pertained to their office. But priests, because their travail was much more easy and light, than was the office of the levites, God ordained the priests should take for their livelihood to do their office, the tenth part of those tithes that were given to the levites. But now, I said, in the new law, neither Christ nor any of his apostles took tithes of the people, nor commanded the people to pay tithes, neither to priests, nor to deacons. But Christ taught the people to do alms, that is, works of mercy, to poor needy men, of surplus, that is, superfluous of their temporal goods, which they had more than they needed reasonably to their necessary livelihood. And thus, I said, not of tithes, but of pure alms of the people, Christ lived and his apostles, when they were so busy in preaching of the word of God to the people, that they might not otherwise work to get their livelihood. But, after Christ's ascension, and when the apostles had received the Holy Ghost, they worked with their hands to get their livelihood, when that they might thus do for busy preaching. Therefore by example of himself, St. Paul teacheth all the priests of Christ to work with their hands, when for busy teaching of the people they might thus do. And thus all these priests, whose priesthood God accepteth now, or will accept, or did in the apostles' time, and after their decease, will do to the world's end. But, as Cistersiensis tells, in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1271, one pope Gregory the tenth ordained new tithes first to be given to priests now in the new law. But St. Paul in his time, whose trace or example all priests of God enforce them to follow, seeing the covetousness that was among the people, desiring to destroy that foul sin through the grace of God and true virtuous living and example of himself, wrote and taught all priests to follow him as he followed Christ, patiently, willingly, and gladly in high poverty. Wherefore Paul saith thus, The Lord hath ordained that they that preach the gospel, shall live of the gospel. But we, saith Paul, that covet and busy us to be faithful followers of Christ, use not this power. For lo, as Paul witnesses afterward, when he was full poor and needy, preaching among the people; he was not chargeable unto them, but with his hands he worked, not only to get his own living, but also the living of other poor and needy

creatures.* And since the people was never so covetous, nor so avaricious, I guess, as they are now, it were good counsel that all priests took good heed to this heavenly learning of Paul, following him here in wilful poverty, nothing charging the people for their bodily livelihood. But, because that many priests do contrary to Paul in this aforesaid doctrine, Paul biddeth the people take heed to those priests that follow him as he had given them example. As if Paul would say thus to the people, Accept ye none other priests than they that live after the form that I have taught you. For certain, in whatsoever dignity or order any priest is in, if he conform him not to follow Christ and his apostles, in willing poverty, and in other heavenly virtues, and especially in true preaching of God's word, though such a one be named a priest, yet he is no more than a priest in name, for the work of a very priest in such a one is wanting. This sentence approveth Augustine, Gregory, Chrysostom, and Lincoln† plainly.

The archbishop said to me, Thinkest thou this is wholesome learning, to sow openly, or yet privily among the people? Certainly, this doctrine contraries plainly the ordinance of holy fathers, who have ordained, granted, and licensed priests to be in divers degrees, and to live by tithes and offerings of the people, and by other duties.

I said, Sir, if priests were now in measurable measure and number, and lived virtuously, and taught busily and truly the word of God, by example of Christ and of his apostles, without tithes, offerings, and other duties that priests now challenge and take, the people would give them freely sufficient livelihood.

And a clerk said to me, How wilt thou make this good, that the people will give freely to priests their livelihood; since that now by the law every priest can scarcely constrain the people to give them their livelihood?

I said, Sir, it is now no wonder though the people grudge to give priests the livelihood that they ask. Many people know now, how that priests should live, and how that they live contrary to Christ and to his apostles. And therefore the people are full heavy to pay, as they do, their temporal goods to parsons, and to other vicars and priests, who should be faithful dispensators of the parish's goods; taking

* This rule with the rule of begging friars cannot stand together.—*Fox.*

† Grosthead.

to themselves no more but a scarce living of tithes, or of offerings, by the ordinance of the common law. For whatsoever priests take of the people, be it tithe or offering, or any other duty or service, the priests ought to have thereof no more than a bare living; and to depart the residue to the poor men and women, especially of the parish of which they take this temporal living. But the most of priests now waste their parish's goods, and spend them at their own will, after the world, in their vain lusts. So that in few places poor men have duly, as they should have, their own sustenance, neither of tithes, nor of offerings, nor of other large wages and foundations that priests take of the people, in divers manners above what they need for needful sustenance of meat and clothing. But the poor needy people are forsaken and left of priests to be sustained of the parishioners, as if the priests took nothing of the parishioners to help the people with.

And thus, sir, unto over great charges of the parishioners they pay their temporal goods twice, where once might suffice, if priests were true dispensators. Also, sir, the parishioners that pay their temporal goods, be they tithes or offerings, to priests that do not their office among them justly, are partners of every sin of those priests; because that they sustain those priests' folly in their sin, with their temporal goods. If these things be well considered, what wonder is it then, sir, if the parishioners grudge against these dispensators?

Then the archbishop said to me, Thou that shouldest be judged and ruled by holy church, presumptuously thou deemest holy church to have erred in the ordinance of tithes and other duties to be paid to priests. It shall be long ere thou thrive, losel, that despisest thy ghostly mother. How darest thou speak this, losel, among the people? Are not tithes given to priests to live by?

I said, Sir, St. Paul saith, that tithes were given in the old law to levites and to priests, that came of the lineage of Levi. But our priests, he saith, came not of the lineage of Levi, but of the lineage of Judah, to which Judah no tithes were promised to be given, Heb. vii. Therefore Paul saith, Since the priesthood is changed from the generation of Levi to the generation of Judah, it is necessary that changing also be made of the law. So that priests live now without tithes and other duties that they claim, following Christ and his apostles in willing poverty, as they have given them

example. For since Christ lived, all the time of his preaching, by pure alms of the people; and by example of him his apostles lived in the same manners, or else by the labour of their hands, as it is said above. Every priest, whose priesthood Christ approves, knows well, and confesses in word and in work, that a disciple ought not to be above his master, but it suffices to a disciple to be as his master, simple and pure, meek and patient; and by example especially of his master Christ every priest should rule him in all his living; and so, after his skill and power, a priest should busy him to inform and to rule whomsoever he might charitably.

And the archbishop said to me with a great spirit, God's curse have thou and mine for this teaching; for thou wouldst hereby make the old law more free and perfect than the new law. For thou sayest that it is lawful to levites and to priests to take tithes in the old law, and so to enjoy their privileges; but to us priests in the new law, thou sayest it is not lawful to take tithes; and thus thou givest to levites of the old law more freedom than to priests of the new law.

I said, Sir, I marvel that ye understand this plain text of Paul thus. Ye wot well, that the levites and priests in the old law that took tithes, were not so free nor so perfect, as Christ and his apostles who took no tithes. And, sir, there is a doctor, I think that it is St. Jerome, who saith thus, The priests that challenge now in the new law tithes, say in effect, that Christ is not become man, nor hath yet suffered death for man's love. Wherefore this doctor saith this sentence, Since tithes were the hires and wages limited to levites and to priests of the old law for bearing about of the tabernacle, and for slaying and flaying of beasts, and for burning of sacrifice, and for keeping of the temple, and for blowing the trumpet of battle before the host of Israel, and other divers observances that pertained to their office—those priests that will challenge or take tithes, deny that Christ is come in the flesh, and do the priest's office of the old law, for whom tithes were granted, for else, as this doctor saith, priests take now tithes wrongfully.

And the archbishop said to his clerks, Heard you ever losel speak thus? Certainly this is the learning of them all, that wheresoever they come, and they may be suffered, they enforce them to impugn the freedom of holy church.

I said, Sir, why call ye the taking of tithes, and of such other duties, that priests challenge now wrongfully, the freedom of holy church; since neither Christ nor his apostles challenged or took such duties? Therefore these takings of priests now are not justly called the freedom of holy church, but all such giving and taking ought to be called and holden the slanderous covetousness of men of the holy church.

And the archbishop said to me, Why, losel, wilt not thou and others that are confederate with thee, seek out of holy scripture, and of the sentences of doctors, all sharp authorities against lords, knights, and squires, and against other secular men, as thou dost against priests?

And I said, Sir, whatsoever men, or women, lords, or ladies, or any others, that are present in our preaching specially, or in our communing, after our knowledge, we tell out to them their office and their charges. But, sir, since Chrysostom saith, that priests are the stomach of the people, it is needful in preaching, and also in communing, to be most busy about this priesthood. Since by the viciousness of priests both lords and commons are most sinfully infected, and led into the worst. And because that the covetousness and pride of priests, and the boast that they have and make of their dignity and power, destroys not only the virtues of priesthood in priests themselves, but also over this, it stirreth God to take great vengeance both upon the lords, and the commons, who suffer these priests charitably.

And the archbishop said to me, Thou judgest every priest proud that will not go arrayed as thou dost. By ——, I deem him to be more meek that goeth every day in a scarlet gown, than thou in thy threadbare blue gown.* Whereby knowest thou a proud man?

And I said, Sir, a proud priest may be known when he denies to follow Christ and his apostles in willing poverty, and other virtues; and coveteth worldly worship, and taketh it gladly, and gathers together with pleading, menacing, or with flattering, or with simony, any worldly goods; and most, if a priest busy not himself to withstand sin chiefly in himself, and after in all other men and women after his knowledge and power.

The archbishop said to me, Though thou knewest a priest to have all these vices, and though thou sawest a

* Wickliff and his fellows were usually accustomed in their preaching to go barefoot, and in simple russet gowns.—*Fox, Life of Wickliff.*

priest commit sins of the flesh,—wouldst thou therefore condemn this priest as damnable? I say to thee, in the turning about of thy hand, such a sinner may be verily repented.

And I said, Sir, I will not condemn any man for any sin that I know done or may be done, so that the sinner leave his sin. But, by authority of holy scripture, he that sinneth thus openly as you show here, is damnable for doing of such a sin; and most specially a priest who should be example to all others to hate and fly sin. And in how short time soever ye say that such a sinner may be repented, he ought not of him that knoweth his sinning, to be judged verily repentant, without open evidence of great shame and hearty sorrow for his sin. For whosoever, and especially a priest, uses pride, envy, covetousness, lechery, simony, or any other vices, shows not as open evidence of repentance as he hath given evil example and occasion of sinning, if he continue in any such sin as long as he may; it is likely that sin leaveth him, and he not sin. And, as I understand, such a one sinneth unto death, for whom nobody oweth to pray, as St. John saith.

And a clerk said then to the archbishop, Sir, the longer that ye oppose him, the worse he is; and the more you busy you to amend him, the waywarder he is. For he is of so shrewd a kind, that he shames not only to be himself a foul nest, but without shame he busies him to make his nest fouler.

Then the archbishop said to his clerk, Suffer awhile, for I am at an end with him; for there is another point certified against him, and I will hear what he saith thereto.

Then he said to me, Lo it is here certified against thee, that thou preachedst openly at Shrewsbury, that it is not lawful to swear in any case.

I said, Sir, I never preached so openly, nor have I taught in this wise in any place. But, sir, as I preached in Shrewsbury, with my protestation I say to you now here; that by the authority of the epistle of St. James, and by witness of divers saints and doctors, I have preached openly in one place or other, that it is not lawful in any case to swear by any creature. And over this, sir, I have also preached and taught by the aforesaid authorities, that nobody should swear in any case, if that without oath, in anywise, he that is charged to swear might excuse himself to them that have power to compel him to swear in things

lawful. But if a man may not excuse himself, without oath, to them that have power to compel him to swear, then he ought to swear only by God, taking him only that is Truth for to witness the truth.*

Then a clerk asked me if it were not lawful to a subject, at the bidding of his prelate, to kneel down and touch the holy gospel book, and kiss it, saying, So help me God and this holy dome ?† for he should after his skill and power do all things that his prelate commands him.

I said to them, Sirs, ye speak here full generally or largely. What if a prelate commanded his subject to do an unlawful thing, should he obey thereto ?

And the archbishop said, A subject ought not to suppose that his prelate will bid him do an unlawful thing. For a subject ought to think that his prelate will bid him do nothing but what he will answer for before God, that it is lawful. And then, though the bidding of the prelate be unlawful, the subject hath no peril to fulfil it, since he thinketh and judgeth that whatsoever his prelate bids him do, that it is lawful to him for to do it.

I said, Sir, I trust not thereto. But to our purpose : sir, I tell you that I was once in a gentleman's house, and there were then two clerks there, a master of divinity, and a man of law, which man of law was also communing in divinity. And among other things, these men spake of oaths, and the man of law said, At the bidding of his sovereign who had power to charge him to swear, he would lay his hand upon a book, and hear his charge. And if his charge to his understanding were unlawful, he would hastily withdraw his hand upon the book, taking there only God to witness that he would fulfil that lawful charge, after his power. And the master of divinity said then to him thus : Certainly he that lays his hand upon a book in this wise, and

* This imputation was cast upon Thorpe, and many who were of his sentiments, on account of their bearing testimony against the profane swearing which then abounded, even more than in our days, and with a horrid variety of oaths. Wickliff describes the abbots or priors riding in state and great splendour, swearing by all the members of Christ. The parson in the Canterbury Tales, having reproved the host for swearing, the latter exclaims, " I smell a Lollard in the wind." In solemn or judicial oaths they objected to being sworn by, or upon, any created or formed substance, such as relics of the saints. Articles of this description were sometimes concealed in the altars upon which men made their oaths, and their engagements were deemed the more binding when they learned this. William duke of Normandy acted thus to Harold.

† Judgment, opinion.

makes there a promise to do that which he is commanded, is obliged thereby by book oath then to fulfil his charge. For, no doubt, he that chargeth him to lay his hand thus upon a book, touching the book, and swearing by it, and kissing it, promising in this form to do this thing or that, will say and witness that he who touches thus a book, and kisses it, has sworn upon that book. And all other men who see that man thus do, and also all those who hear hereof, in the same manner will say and witness, that this man hath sworn upon a book. Wherefore the master of divinity said, it was not lawful either to give or to take any such charge upon a book; for every book is nothing else but divers creatures of which it is made. Therefore to swear upon a book, is to swear by creatures, and this swearing is ever unlawful. This sentence Chrysostom witnesses plainly, blaming them greatly that bring forth a book to swear upon, charging clerks that in no wise they constrain any body to swear, whether they think a man to swear true or false.

And the archbishop and his clerks scorned me, and blamed me greatly for this saying. And the archbishop menaced me with great punishment and sharp, except I left this opinion of swearing.

I said, Sir, this is not mine opinion, but it is the opinion of Christ our Saviour, and of St. James, and of Chrysostom, and of other divers saints and doctors.

Then the archbishop had a clerk read this homily of Chrysostom; which homily this clerk held in his hand, written in a roll; which roll the archbishop caused to be taken from my fellow at Canterbury. And so then this clerk read this roll, till he came to a clause where Chrysostom saith, that it is sin to swear well.

Then a clerk, Malveren, as I guess, said to the archbishop, Sir, I pray you learn of him, how he understands Chrysostom here, saying it to be sin to swear well.

So the archbishop asked me, how I understood here Chrysostom.

And certain I was somewhat afraid to answer hereto. For I had not busied me to study about the sense thereof, but lifting up my mind to God, I prayed of him grace. And as fast as I thought how Christ said to his apostles, When for my name ye shall be brought before judges, I shall give into your mouth wisdom that your adversaries shall not againstsay; and, trusting faithfully in the word of God, I

said, Sir, I know well that many men and women have now swearing so in custom, that they neither know nor will know, that they do evil to swear as they do. But they think and say, that they do well to swear as they do, though they know well that they swear untruly. For they say, they may by their swearing, though it be false, avoid blame or temporal harm, which they should have if they swear not thus. And, sir, many men and women maintain strongly that they swear well, when that is truth which they swear for. Also full many men and women say now, that it is well done to swear by creatures, when they may not, as they say, otherwise be believed. And also, full many men and women now say, that it is well done to swear by God, and by our lady, and by other saints, to have them in mind. But, since all these sayings are but excusations, and sin, methinks, sir, that this sense of Chrysostom may be alleged well against all such swearers; witnessing that all these sin grievously, though they think themselves to swear in this aforesaidwise well. For it is evil done, and great sin to swear truth, when in any manner a man may excuse himself without oath.

And the archbishop said, that Chrysostom might be thus understood.

Then a clerk said to me, Wilt thou tarry my lord no longer, but submit thee here meekly to the ordinance of holy church, and lay thy hand upon a book, touching the holy gospel of God, promising not only with thy mouth, but also with thine heart, to stand to my lord's ordinance?

And I said, Sir, have I not told you here, how that I heard a master of divinity say that in such case it is all one to touch a book, and to swear by a book.

The archbishop said, There is no master of divinity in England so great, but if he hold this opinion before me, I shall punish him as I shall do thee, except thou swear as I shall charge thee.

I said, Sir, is not Chrysostom an ententive doctor? And the archbishop said, Yea.

I said, If Chrysostom proves him worthy of great blame that brings forth a book to swear upon, it must needs follow, that he is more to blame who swears on that book.

And the archbishop said, If Chrysostom meant accordingly to the ordinance of holy church, we will accept him.

Then said a clerk to me, Is not the word of God, and

God himself, equivalent, that is, of one authority? And I said, Yea.

Then he said to me, Why wilt thou not swear then by the gospel of God, that is, God's word, since it is all one to swear by the word of God, and by God himself?

I said, Sir, since I may not now otherwise be believed, but by swearing, I perceive, as Augustine saith, that it is not speedful that ye, who should be my brethren, should not believe me; therefore I am ready by the word of God, as the Lord commanded me by his word, to swear.

Then the clerk said to me, Lay then thine hand upon the book, touching the holy gospel of God, and take thy charge. And I said, Sir, I understand that the holy gospel of God may not be touched with man's hand.

The clerk said, I fonded,* and that I said not truth. And I asked this clerk, whether it were more to read the gospel, than to touch the gospel?

He said, it was more to read the gospel.

Then I said, Sir, by authority of St. Jerome, the gospel is not the gospel for reading of the letter, but for the belief that men have in the word of God. It is the gospel that we believe, and not the letter that we read; because the letter that is touched with man's hand, is not the gospel; but the sentence that is verily believed in man's heart, is the gospel. For so Jerome saith, the gospel, that is the virtue† of God's word, is not in the leaves of the book, but it is in the root of reason. Neither the gospel, he saith, is in the writing alone of the letters, but the gospel is in the marking of the sentence of scripture. This sentence St. Paul approves, saying thus, The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. And David saith, The voice of the Lord, that is, his word, is in power. And after David saith, Through the word of God the heavens were formed, and in the Spirit of his mouth is all the power of them. And I pray you, sir, understand ye well how David saith then, in the Spirit of the mouth of the Lord is all the power of angels and of men.

The clerk said to me, Thou wouldest make us to trifle with thee. Say we not that the gospel is written in the mass book?

And I said, Sir, though men use to say thus, yet it is an imperfect speech. For the principal part of a thing is

* Trifled. † Power.

properly the whole thing. For lo, man's soul that may not now be seen here, nor touched with any sensible thing, is properly man. And all the virtue of a tree is in the root thereof which may not be seen; for, do away the root and the tree is destroyed. And, sir, as you said to me right now, God and his word are of one authority. And, sir, St. Jerome witnesses that Christ, very God and very man, is hid in the letter of his law; thus also the gospel is hid in the letter. For as it is full likely that many, and divers men and women here in the earth, touched Christ and saw him, and knew his bodily person, who neither touched, nor saw, nor knew his Godhead spiritually, right thus, many men now touch, and see, and write, and read the scriptures of God's law, who neither see, touch, nor read effectually the gospel. For as the Godhead of Christ, that is, the power of God, is known by the virtue of belief, so is the gospel, that is, Christ's word.

A clerk said to me, These are full misty matters and unsavoury, that thou showest here to us.

And I said, Sir, if you that are masters know not plainly this sentence, you may sorely dread that the kingdom of heaven be taken from you, as it was from the princes of priests, and from the elders of the Jews.

Then a clerk, as I guess, Malveren, said to me, Thou knowest not thine equivocations; for the kingdom of heaven hath divers understandings. What callest thou the kingdom of heaven in this sentence that thou showest here?

I said, Sir, by good reason and sentence of doctors, the realm of heaven is called here the understanding of God's word. And a clerk said to me, From whom thinkest thou that this understanding is taken away?

I said, Sir, by authority of Christ himself, the effectual understanding of Christ's word is taken away from all them chiefly which are great lettered men, and presume to understand high things, and will be holden for wise men, and desire mastership and high state and dignity; but they will not conform them to the living and teaching of Christ and of his apostles.

Then the archbishop said, Well, well, thou wilt judge thy sovereigns. By ——, the king doth not his duty, unless he suffer thee to be condemned.

Then another clerk said to me, Why, on Friday that last was, counselledst thou a man of my lord's that he should not shrive him to any man, but only to God?

With this asking I was abashed; and then by and by I knew that I was subtily betrayed of a man who came to me in prison on the Friday before, communing with me in this matter of confession. And certainly, by his words I thought that this man came then to me of full fervent and charitable will; but now I know he came to tempt me, and to accuse me. God forgive him, if it be his will; and with all my heart. When I had thought thus, I said to this clerk, Sir, I pray you that you would fetch this man hither; and all the words, as near as I can repeat them, which I spake to him on Friday in the prison, I will rehearse now here before you all, and before him.

And, as I guess, the archbishop said then to me, They that are now here suffice to repeat them. How saidst thou to him?

I said, Sir, that man came and asked me in divers things, and after his asking I answered him what was good as I understood. And as he showed to me by his words he was weary of his living in court, and right heavy for his own vicious living, and also for the viciousness of other men, and especially of priests' evil living; and therefore he said to me with a sorrowful heart, as I guessed, that he purposed fully within short time to leave the court, and to busy him to know God's law, and to conform all his life thereafter. And when he had said to me these words, and others more which I would rehearse if he were present, he prayed me to hear his confession. And I said to him, Sir, wherefore come ye to me to be confessed of me? Ye know well that the archbishop putteth and holdeth me here as one unworthy either to give or to take any sacrament of holy church.

He said unto me, Brother, I know well, and so many others more know, that you and such others are wrongfully vexed, and therefore I commune with you the more gladly. And I said to him, Certainly, I know well that many men of this court, and especially the priests of this household, would be full evil apaid* both with you and me, if they knew that you were confessed of me. And he said, that he cared not therefore, for he had full little affection in them. And, as methought, he spake these words and many others of so good will and of so high desire to have known and done the pleasant will of God. And I said to him, as with my aforesaid protestation I say to you now here; Sir,

* Ill satisfied.

I counsel you to absent you from all evil company, and to draw you to them that love and busy them to know and to keep the precepts of God. And then the good Spirit of God will move you to occupy busily all your understanding in gathering together of all your sins, as far as you can bethink you, shaming greatly of them, and sorrowing heartily for them. Yea, sir, the Holy Ghost will then put in your heart a good will and a fervent desire to take and to hold a good purpose, to hate ever and to flee, after your judgment and power, all occasion of sin; and so then wisdom shall come to you from above, enlightening with divers beams of grace and of heavenly desire all your understanding, informing you how you shall trust steadfastly in the mercy of the Lord, acknowledging to him only all your vicious living, praying to him ever devoutly of charitable counsel and continuance, hoping without doubt that if you continue thus, busying you faithfully to know and to keep his biddings, he will, for he only may, forgive you all your sins.

And this man said to me, Though God forgive men their sins, yet it behoves men to be assoiled* of priests, and to do the penance that they enjoin them. And I said to him, Sir, it is all one to assoil men of their sins, and to forgive men their sins. Wherefore, since it pertains only to God to forgive sin, it suffices in this cause to counsel men and women to leave their sin, and to comfort them that busy themselves thus to do, to hope steadfastly in the mercy of God. And again, priests ought to tell sharply to customable sinners, that if they will not make an end of their sin, but continue in divers sins while they may sin, all such deserve pain without end. And therefore priests should ever busy them to live well and holily, and to teach the people busily and truly the word of God, showing to all folk in open preaching and in privy counselling, that the Lord God only forgiveth sin. And therefore, those priests that take upon them to assoil men of their sins, blaspheme God; since it pertains only to the Lord to assoil men of all their sins. For no doubt a thousand years after that Christ was man, no priest of Christ durst take upon him to teach the people, neither privily nor openly, that they needed to come to be assoiled of them as priests now do. But by authority of Christ's word, priests bound indurate

* Absolved.

customable sinners to everlasting pains, who in no time of their lives would busy them faithfully to know the biddings of God, nor to keep them. And again, all they that would occupy all their mind to hate and to fly all occasion of sin, dreading over all things to offend God, and loving to please him continually, priests showed to these men and women how the Lord assoiled them of all their sins; and thus Christ promised to confirm in heaven all the binding and loosing that priests, by authority of his word, bind men in sin that are indurate therein, or loose them out of sin here upon earth that are truly repentant.

This man hearing these words, said that he might well in conscience consent to this sentence. But he said, Is it not needful to the lay people that cannot thus do, to go shrive them to priests? And I said, If a man feel himself so distroubled with any sin, that he cannot by his own skill avoid this sin without counsel of them that are herein wiser than he, in such a case, the counsel of a good priest is full necessary. And if a good priest fail, as they do now commonly, in such a case, St. Augustine saith, that a man may lawfully commune and take counsel of a virtuous secular man. But certainly, that man or woman is overladen and too brutish who cannot bring their own sins into their mind, busying them night and day to hate and to forsake all their sins, doing a sigh for them after their knowledge and power. And, sir, full accordingly to this sentence, upon Midlent Sunday, two years, as I guess now agone, I heard a monk of Feversham, that men called Morden, preach at Canterbury at the cross within Christchurch abbey, saying thus of confession, That as through the suggestion of the fiend, without counsel of any other, of themselves many men and women can imagine and find means and ways enough to come to pride, to theft, to lechery, and other divers vices; in contrariwise, (this monk said,) since the Lord God is more ready to forgive sin than the fiend is or may be of power to move any body to sin, then whosoever will shame and sorrow heartily for their sins, acknowledging them faithfully to God, amending them after their power and ability, without counsel of any other body than of God and of himself, through the grace of God, all such men and women may find sufficient means to come to God's mercy, and so to be fully assoiled of all their sins. This sentence I said, sir, to this man of yours, and the very words as near as I can guess.

The archbishop said, Holy church approves not this learning.

I said, Sir, holy church, of which Christ is head in heaven and in earth, must needs approve this sentence. For lo, hereby all men and women may, if they will, be sufficiently taught to know and to keep the commandments of God, and to hate and to fly continually all occasion of sin, and to love and to seek virtues busily, and to believe in God stably, and to trust in his mercy steadfastly, and so to come to perfect charity, and continue therein perseveringly. And more the Lord asks not of any man here now in this life. And certainly, since Jesus Christ died upon the cross, willingly, to make men free, men of the church are too bold and too busy to make men thralls, binding them under the pain of endless curse, as they say, to do many observances and ordinances which neither the living nor teaching of Christ nor of his apostles approves.

A clerk said then to me, Thou showest plainly here thy deceit, which thou hast learned of them that travelled to sow the popple among the wheat. But I counsel thee to go quite away from this learning, and submit thee lowly to my lord, and thou shalt find him yet to be gracious to thee.

And as fast then, another clerk said to me, How wast thou so bold at Paul's Cross, in London, to stand there with thy tippet bounden about thine head, and to reprove in his sermon the worthy clerk Alkerton, drawing away all that thou mightest? Yea, and the same day at afternoon, thou, meeting the worthy doctor in Watling-street, calledst him false flatterer and hypocrite.

I said, Sir, I think certainly that there was no man nor woman that verily hated sin, and loved virtues, hearing the sermon of the clerk at Oxford, and also Alkerton's sermon, but they said, or might justly say, that Alkerton reproved that clerk untruly, and slandered him wrongfully and uncharitably. For, no doubt, if the living and teaching of Christ chiefly, and of his apostles, be true, nobody that loveth God and his law will blame any sentence that the clerk then preached there; since by authority of God's word, and by approved saints and doctors, and by open reason, this clerk approved all things clearly that he preached there.

And a clerk of the archbishop said to me, His sermon was false, and that he showed openly, since he dare not

stand forth and defend his preaching that he then preached there.

I said, Sir, I think that he purposes to stand steadfastly thereby, or else he slanders himself foully, and also many others who have great trust, that he will stand by the truth of the gospel. For I wot well, this sermon is written both in Latin and English, and many men have it and they set great price thereby. And, sir, if you were present with the archbishop at Lambeth when this clerk appeared, and was at his answer before the archbishop, you know well that this clerk denied not there his sermon, but two days he maintained it before the archbishop and his clerks.

Then the archbishop, or one of his clerks, said, That harlot shall be met with for that sermon. For no man but he and thou, and such other false harlots, praise any such preaching.

Then the archbishop said, Your cursed sect is busy, and it joys greatly, to contrary and to destroy the privilege and freedom of holy church.

I said, Sir, I know no man that labours so busily as this sect doth, which you reprove, to make rest and peace in holy church. For pride, covetousness, and simony, which trouble most the holy church, this sect hates and flees, and labours busily to move all other men in like manner, unto meekness and willing poverty, and charity, and free ministering of the sacrament. This sect loveth and useth, and is full busy to move all other folks thus to do. For these virtues all members of holy church owe to their head, Christ.

Then a clerk said to the archbishop, Sir, it is far day, and you have far to ride to night; therefore make an end with him, for he will make none; but the more, sir, that you busy you to draw him toward you, the more contumacious he is made, and the further from you.

Then Malveren said to me, William, kneel down, and pray my lord's grace, and leave all thy fantasies, and become a child of holy church.

I said, Sir, I have prayed the archbishop oft, and yet I pray him for the love of Christ, that he will leave his indignation that he hath against me, and that he will suffer me after my knowledge and power, to do mine office of priesthood, as I am charged of God to do it. For I covet nought else but to serve my God, to his pleasing, in the state that I stand in, and have taken me to.

And the archbishop said to me, If of good heart thou wilt submit thee now here meekly, to be ruled from this time forth by my counsel, obeying meekly and willingly to my ordinance, thou shalt find it most profitable and best to thee to do thus. Therefore tarry thou me no longer, grant to do this that I have said to thee now here shortly, or deny it utterly.

I said to the archbishop, Sir, ought we to believe that Jesus Christ was and is very God and very man? And the archbishop said, Yea.

I said, Sir, ought we to believe that all Christ's living and his teaching is true in every point? He said, Yea.

I said, Sir, ought we to believe that the living of the apostles and the teaching of Christ and all the prophets, which are written in the bible for the health and salvation of good people, are true? He said, Yea.

I said, Sir, ought all christian men and women, after their knowledge and power, to conform all their living to the teaching specially of Christ, and also to the teaching and living of his apostles and of prophets, in all things that are pleasant to God, and for the edification of his church? He said, Yea.

And I said, Sir, ought the doctrine, the bidding, or the counsel of any body to be accepted or obeyed unto, except this doctrine, these biddings, or this counsel, may be granted and affirmed by Christ's living and his teaching specially, or by the living and teaching of his apostles and prophets?

The archbishop said to me, Other doctrines ought not to be accepted, nor ought we to obey to any man's bidding or counsel, except we can perceive that his bidding or counsel accords with the life and teaching of Christ, and of his apostles and prophets.

I said, Sir, are not all the learning, and biddings, and counsels of holy church, means and healthful remedies to know and to withstand the private suggestions, and the open temptations of the fiend? And also ways and healthful remedies to slay pride and all other deadly sins, and the branches of them, and sovereign means to purchase grace to withstand and overcome all the fleshly lusts and movings? And the archbishop said, Yea.

I said, Sir, whatsoever thing ye or any other body bid or counsel me to do, according to this aforesaid learning, after my knowledge and power, through the help of God, I will meekly, with all my heart, obey thereto.

And the archbishop said to me, Submit thee then now here meekly and wilfully to the ordinance of holy church, which I shall show to thee.

I said, Sir, accordingly as I have here now before you rehearsed, I will now be ready to obey full gladly to Christ the head of the holy church, and to the learnings and biddings and counsels of every pleasing member of him.

Then the archbishop, striking with his hand fiercely upon a cupboard, spake to me with a great spirit, saying, By ——, but if thou leave not such additions, obliging thee now here, without any exception, to mine ordinance, before that I go out of this place, I shall make thee as sure as any thief that is in the prison of Lanterne; advise thee now what thou wilt do. And then, as if he had been angered, he went from the cupboard where he stood to a window.

Then Malveren and another clerk came nearer me, and they spake to me many words full pleasantly; and another while they menaced me, and counselled full busily, to submit me, or else they said I should not escape punishing over measure; for they said I should be degraded, cursed, and burned, and so then damned. But now, they said, thou mayest avoid all these mischiefs, if thou wilt submit thee willingly and meekly to this worthy prelate, that hath cure of thy soul. And, for the pity of Christ, said they, bethink thee, how great clerks the bishop of Lincoln, Hereford, and Purvey were, and yet are, and also B., who is a well understanding man. Which also have forsaken and revoked all the learning and opinions that thou and such others hold. Wherefore, since each of them is much wiser than thou art, we counsel thee for the best; that by the example of these four clerks thou follow them, submitting thee as they do.

One of the bishop's clerks said then there, that he heard Nicholas Hereford say, that since he forsook and revoked all the learning and Lollards' opinions, he hath had much greater favour and more delight to hold against them, than ever he had to hold with them, while he held with them.

Therefore Malveren said to me, I understand if thou wilt take thee to a priest, and shrive thee clean, forsake all such opinions, and take thy penance of my lord here, for the holding and teaching of them, within short time thou shalt be greatly comforted in this doing.

I said to the clerks, who thus busily counselled me to

follow these aforesaid men, Sirs, if these men, of whom ye counsel me to take example, had forsaken benefices of temporal profit and of worldly worship, so that they had absented themselves, and avoided all occasions of covetousness and of fleshly lust, and had taken upon them simple living and willing poverty; they had herein given good example to me and to many other, to have followed them. But now, since all these four men have slanderously and shamefully done the contrary, consenting to receive and to have and to hold temporal benefices, living now more worldly and more fleshly than they did before, conforming them to the manners of this world, I forsake them herein, and in all their foresaid slanderous doing. For I purpose, with the help of God, in remission of my sins, and of my foul cursed living, to hate and to flee, privately and openly, to follow these men, teaching and counselling whomsoever I may, to flee and to avoid the way that they have chosen to go in, which will lead them to the worst end, if in convenient time they repent them not, verily forsaking and revoking openly the slander that they have put, and every day yet put to Christ's church. For certain, so open blasphemy and slander as they have spoken and done in their revoking and forsaking of the truth, ought not and may not privily be amended duly. Wherefore, sirs, I pray you that you busy not to move me to follow these men in revoking and forsaking the truth, as they have done, and yet do; wherein by open evidence they stir God to great wrath, and not only against themselves, but also against all those who favour them, or consent to them herein, or who commune with them, except it be for their amendment. For whereas these men first were pursued of enemies, now they have obliged them by oath to slander and pursue Christ in his members. Wherefore, as I trust stedfastly in the goodness of God, the worldly covetousness, and the lusty living and the sliding from the truth of these runagates, shall be to me and to many other men and women an example and an evidence to stand more stiffly by the truth of Christ.

For certainly many men and women do mark and abhor the foulness and cowardness of these aforesaid untrue men, how they are overcome and stopped with benefices, and withdrawn from the truth of God's word, forsaking utterly to suffer therefore bodily persecution. For by this unfaithful doing and apostacy of them, especially that are great lettered men, and have acknowledged openly the truth, and

now either for pleasure or displeasure of tyrants, have taken hire and temporal wages to forsake the truth, and to hold against it, slandering and pursuing them that covet to follow Christ in the way of righteousness, many men and women therefore are now moved. But many more, through the grace of God, shall be moved hereby to learn the truth of God to do thereafter, and to stand boldly thereby.

Then the archbishop said to his clerks, Busy you no longer about him, for he, and other such as he is, are confederate together that they will not swear to be obedient, and to submit themselves to prelates of holy church. For now, since I stood here, his fellow also sent me word that he will not swear, and that this fellow counselled him that he should not swear to me. And, losel, in that thing which in thee is, thou hast busied thee to lose this young man; but, blessed be God, thou shalt not have thy purpose of him. For he has forsaken all thy learning, submitting him to be pliant and obedient to the ordinance of holy church, and weeps full bitterly, and curses thee full heartily, for the venomous teaching which thou hast shown to him, counselling him to do thereafter.

And for thy false counselling of many others and him, thou hast great cause to be right sorry. For long time thou hast busied thee to pervert whomsoever thou mightest. Therefore, thou art worthy of as many deaths, as thou hast given evil counsels. And therefore, by ——, thou shalt go thither, where Nicholas Hereford and Thomas Purvey were harboured. And I undertake ere this day eight days, thou shalt be right glad to do what thing soever I bid thee to do. And, losel, I shall assay if I can make thee there as sorrowful, as it was told me, thou wast glad at my last going out of England.* By St. Thomas, I shall turn thy joy into sorrow.

I said, Sir, there can nobody prove lawfully that ever I joyed of the manner of your going out of this land. But, sir, to say the truth, I was joyful when you were gone; for the bishop of London, in whose prison you left me, found in me no cause to hold me longer in his prison, but at the request of my friends, he delivered me to them, asking of me no manner of submitting.

Then the archbishop said to me, Wherefore I went out of

* Archbishop Arundel was tried for treason and banished, A. D. 1397, in less than twelve months after he had been appointed to the see of Canterbury. He was recalled about two years after.

England is unknown to thee; but be this well known to thee, that God, as I know well, hath called me again, and brought me into this land, to destroy thee and the false sect that thou art of; as, by ——, I shall pursue you so narrowly, that I shall not leave a slip of you in this land.

I said to the archbishop, Sir, the holy prophet Jeremiah said to the false prophet Hananiah, When the word that is the prophecy of a prophet, is known or fulfilled, then it shall be known, that the Lord sent the prophet in truth.

And the archbishop, as if he had not been pleased with my saying, turned him away hither and thither, and said, By ——, I shall set upon thy shins a pair of pearls, that thou shalt be glad to change thy voice.

These and many more wondrous and blameful words were spoken to me, menacing me and all others of the same sect to be punished and destroyed unto the uttermost.

And the archbishop called then to him a clerk, and whispered with him; and that clerk went forth, and soon he brought in the constable of Saltwood castle, and the archbishop spoke privately a good while with him; and then the constable went forth, and then came in divers seculars, and they scorned me on every side, and menaced me greatly, and some counselled the archbishop to burn me speedily, and some others counselled him to drown me in the sea, for it is near hand there.

And a clerk standing beside me there, kneeled down to the archbishop, praying him that he would deliver me to him to say matins with him, and he would undertake, that within three days I should not resist any thing that was commanded me to do of my prelate.

The archbishop said, that he would ordain for me himself. And then afterwards came again the constable, and spake privately to the archbishop; and the archbishop commanded the constable to lead me forth thence with him, and so he did. And when we were gone forth thence, we were sent after again. And when I came in again before the archbishop, a clerk bade me kneel down and ask grace, and submit me lowly, and I should find it for the best.

I said then to the archbishop, Sir, as I have said to you divers times to-day, I will willingly and lowly obey and submit me to be ordained ever, after my knowledge and power, to God and to his law, and to every member of holy church, as far as I can perceive that these members accord

with their head Christ, and will teach me, rule me, or chastise me by authority, especially of God's law.

And the archbishop said, I knew well he would not without such additions submit him.

Then I was rebuked, scorned, and menaced on every side; and yet after this divers persons cried upon me to kneel down and submit me; but I stood still, and spake no word. Then there was spoken of me, and to me, many great words, and I stood and heard them menace, curse, and scorn me, but I said nothing.

Then a while after the archbishop said to me, Wilt thou not submit thee to the ordinance of holy church?

I said, Sir, I will full gladly submit me, as I have showed you before.

Then the archbishop bade the constable to have me forth thence in haste.

So then I was led forth, and brought into a foul, unhonest prison, where I came never before. But, thanked be God, when all men were gone forth then from me, and had sparred fast the prison door after them; by and by after, I therein by myself, busied me to think on God, and to thank him for his goodness. And I was then greatly comforted in all my senses, not only for that I was then delivered for a time from the sight, from the hearing, from the presence, from the scorning, and from the menacing of mine enemies; but much more I rejoiced in the Lord, because that through his grace he kept me so, both among the flattering especially, and among the menacing of mine adversaries, that without heaviness and anguish of my conscience, I passed away from them. For, as a tree laid upon another tree, overthwart or cross-wise, so were the archbishop and his three clerks always contrary to me, and I to them.

Now, good God, for thine holy name, and to the praising of thy most blessed name, make us one together, if it be thy will, by authority of thy word, that is true perfect charity, and else not. And that it may thus be, all that read or hear this writing pray heartily to the Lord God, that he for his great goodness, which cannot be expressed with tongue, grant to us, and to all other, who in the same wise, and for the same cause especially, or for any other cause, are at a distance, to be knit and made one in true faith, in stedfast hope, and in perfect charity. Amen.

Besides this examination here above described, came another treatise also to our hands of the same William Thorpe, under the name and title of his testament; which rather, by the matter and handling thereof, might seem to be counted a complaint of vicious priests.

The commencement of this testament is as follows.—

Matthew an apostle of Christ, and his gospeller, witnesses truly in the holy gospel, the most holy living, and the most wholesome teaching of Christ. He rehearses how that Christ likeneth them that hear his words and keep them, to a wise man that buildeth his house upon a stone, that is, a stable and a sure ground. This house is man's soul, in whom Christ delighteth to dwell, if it be grounded, that is, established faithfully in his living and in his true teaching, adorned or made fair with divers virtues, which Christ used and taught, without any meddling of any error, as are chiefly the conditions of charity.

This aforesaid stone is Christ, upon which every faithful soul must be builded, since upon none other ground, than upon Christ's living and his teaching, any body may make any building or housing wherein Christ will come and dwell. This sentence witnesseth St. Paul to the Corinthians, showing to them that nobody may set any other ground than is set, that is, Christ's living and teaching. And, because that all men and women should give all their business here in this life to build them virtuously upon this sure foundation, St. Paul acknowledging the fervent desire, and the good will of the people of Ephesus, wrote to them comfortably, saying, Now ye are not strangers, guests, nor yet comelings;* but ye are the citizens, and of the household of God, builded above upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. In which foundation, every building that is builded or made through the grace of God, it increaseth or groweth into a holy temple—that is, every body that is grounded or builded faithfully in the teaching and living of Christ, is therethrough made the holy temple of God.

This is the stable ground and stedfast stone, Christ, which is the sure corner stone, fast joining and holding mightily together two walls. For through Christ Jesus, the mean or middle person of the Trinity, the Father of heaven is piteous, or mercifully joined and made one together to mankind. And, through dread to offend God, and fervent love to please him, men are inseparably made one to God, and

* Foreigners.

defended surely under his protection. Also this aforesaid stone, Christ, was figured by the square stones of which the temple of God was made. For, as a square stone, wheresoever it is cast or laid, it abideth and lieth stably, so Christ and every faithful member of his church by example of him, abideth and dwelleth stably in true faith, and in all other heavenly virtues, in all adversities that they suffer in the valley of tears.

For lo, when these aforesaid square stones were hewn and wrought to be laid in the walls or pillars of God's temple, no noise or stroke of the workman was heard. Certainly, this silence in working of this stone figureth Christ chiefly and his faithful members, who by his example have been, and yet are, and ever to the world's end shall be so meek and patient in every adversity, that no sound, nor yet any grudging shall any time be perceived in them.*

What was the end of this good man and blessed servant of God, William Thorpe, I find in no story specified. By all conjectures it is to be thought that the archbishop Thomas Arundel, being so hard an adversary against those men, would not let him go. Much less is it to be supposed, that he would ever retract his sentence and opinion, which he so valiantly maintained before the bishop; neither doth it seem that he had any such recanting spirit. Again, neither is it found that he was burned, wherefore it remains most likely to be true, that he, being committed to some strait prison, according as the archbishop in his examination before threatened him; there, as Thorpe confesseth himself, was so straitly kept, that either he was secretly made away, or else there he died by sickness.

The like end also I find to happen to John Ashton, another good follower of Wickliff, who, for the same doctrine of the sacrament, was condemned by the bishops, and because he would not recant, he was committed to perpetual prison, wherein the good man continued till his death. Anno 1382.

* Thorpe then proceeds to expose the ill life and sinful conduct of the ecclesiastics of that day. He concludes by declaring his readiness to suffer for the truth.

EXTRACT

FROM

PROLOGUE TO THE BIBLE.

WRITTEN ABOUT A. D. 1408.

This little work has been incorrectly ascribed to Wickliff: from some references to historical events it evidently was not written till after his decease. The doctrines of the reformer, however, are so explicitly set forth, that it must have been the production of one of his disciples; and from the account given of the English translation of the scriptures, it is supposed to have been written by PURVEY, or some other person closely connected with Wickliff. A brief notice of Purvey has been already given at page 4.

The prologue contains a summary of the books of the old testament, with various doctrinal statements, and was, doubtless, intended by the writer as a prologue to Wickliff's bible, or more probably to a revision of his work. Lewis, in his history of the English translations of the bible, gives some account of a new or revised version, which was not so strictly verbal as that of Wickliff, "but more according to the sense," to a copy of which this prologue has been found appended. He adds, that a manuscript of this version, in the library of Trinity college, Dublin, has the name of Purvey written upon it.

This Prologue was printed in the time of the Reformation, first in 1536, under the title of The Door of Holy Scripture, and afterwards, in 1550, as The Pathway to Perfect Knowledge. From both editions it appears to have been found by the editors affixed or appended to manuscript copies of English bibles; one of them "in the king's chamber." The following pages contain an extract relative to the English version of the scriptures, with some observations respecting the method of translating, which will be interesting to those who value the contents of holy writ.

FORASMUCH as Christ saith that the gospel shall he preached in all the world, and David saith of the apostles and their preaching, The sound of them go out into each land, and the words of them went out into the ends of the world. And, again, David saith, The Lord shall tell, in the scriptures, of peoples, and of these princes that were in it,

that is, in holy church. As Jerome saith in that verse, Holy writ is the scripture of peoples, for it is made that all peoples should know it; and the princes of the church who were therein, are the apostles who had authority to write holy writ, for by that same that the apostles wrote their scriptures by authority, and confirming of the Holy Ghost, it is holy scripture, and faith of christian men. And this dignity hath no man after them, be he ever so holy, ever so wise, as Jerome witnesses on that verse. Also Christ saith of the Jews who cried hosanna to him in the temple, that though they were still, stones should cry; and by stones he understandeth heathen men that worship stones for their gods; and we Englishmen are come of heathen men, therefore we are understood by these stones that should cry after holy writ; and, as Jews interpreted acknowledging, signify clerks that should acknowledge to God by repentance of sins, and by voice of God's commands; so our unlearned men, following the corner-stone, Christ, must be signified by stones that are hard and abiding in the foundation; for though covetous clerks moved by simony, heresy, and many other sins, despise and stop holy writ as much as they may, yet the unlearned people cry after holy writ to know it and keep it, with great cost and peril of their life. For these reasons, and others, with common charity to save all men in our realm, which God will have saved, a simple creature hath translated the BIBLE out of Latin into English.

First, this simple creature had much travail with divers fellows, and helpers, to gather many old bibles, and other doctors and common glosses, and to make one Latin bible some deal true, and then to study it anew, the text with the gloss, and other doctors as he might get; and especially Lyra on the old testament, that helped full much in his work. The third time, to counsel with old grammarians and old divines, of hard words and hard sentences, how they might best be understood and translated. The fourth time, to translate as clearly as he could to the sentence, and to have many good fellows, and wise, at the correcting of the translation. First, it is to know that the best translating out of Latin into English, is to translate after the sentence, and not only after the words. So that the sentence be as open, or opener, in English as in Latin, and go not far from the letter. And if the letter may not be followed in the translating, let the sentence ever be whole and open.

For the words ought to serve to the intent and sentence, and else the words are superfluous or false.

[He then states various rules of grammar observed in translating the bible.]

At the beginning I purposed with God's help to make the sentence as true and open in English as it is in Latin; or more true and more open than it is in Latin. And I pray for charity and common profit of christian souls, that if any wise man find any default of the truth of the translation, let him set in the true sentence and open the holy writ. But look that he examine truly his Latin bible; for no doubt he shall find many bibles in Latin full false, if he look at many. And namely new and the common Latin bibles have more need to be corrected, as many as I have seen in my life, than hath the English bible lately translated. And where the Hebrew, by witness of Jerome,* of Lyra, and set other expositors, discordeth from our Latin bibles, I have in the margin by manner of a gloss, what the Hebrew hath, and how it is understood. And I did this most in the Psalter, which of all our books discordeth most from Hebrew. For the church readeth not the Psalter by the last translation out of Hebrew into Latin, but by another translation of other men that had much less wisdom and holiness than Jerome had, as it may be proved by the proper originals of Jerome which he glossed. And where I have translated as openly and openlier in English as in Latin, let wise men judge that know well both languages, and know well the sentence of holy scripture. And, whether I have done thus or not, no doubt, they that know well the sentence of holy writ, and English together, and will travail with God's grace thereabout, must make the bible as true and as open; yea, and openlier in English than it is in Latin. And, no doubt, to a simple man, with God's grace, and great travail, men might expound much openlier and shortlier the bible in English, than the old great doctors have expounded it in

* Jerome is distinguished among the early fathers of the church for his biblical labours. Towards the close of the fourth century he revised the Latin scriptures by the hexaplar text of Origen, which included a literal version of the Hebrew text, and the new testament he revised after the original. Afterwards he completed a translation of the old testament from Hebrew into Latin, which is that called the vulgate; from this Wickliff made his English version. The Latin vulgate is allowed to be in general a faithful version. It sometimes preserves the true readings where the modern Hebrew copies are corrupted.

Latin, and much sharplier and groundlier than many late postillators or expositors have done.

But God of his great mercy give to us grace to live well, and to say the truth in a becoming manner, and acceptable to God and his people, and spill not our time, be it short, be it long, at God's ordinance. But some that seem wise and holy say thus; If men now were as holy as Jerome was, they might translate out of Latin into English, as he did out of Hebrew and Greek into Latin; and else they should not translate now, as they think, for default of holiness and knowledge. Though this reply seem colourable, it has no good ground; neither reason, neither charity. For why? This reply is more against St. Jerome, and against the first seventy translators, and against holy church, than against simple men that translate now into English. For St. Jerome was not so holy as the apostles and evangelists, whose books he translated into Latin; neither had he such high gifts of the Holy Ghost as they had. And much more the seventy translators were not so holy as Moses and the prophets, and especially David. Neither had they such great gifts of God as Moses and the prophets had.

Furthermore, holy church* approves, not only the true translation of mean christian men, stedfast in christian faith, but also of open heretics that did away many mysteries of Jesus Christ by guileful translation, as Jerome witnesses in one prologue on Job, and in the prologue on Daniel. Much more let the church of England approve the true and holy translation of simple men, that will for no good on earth with their knowledge and power put away the least truth, yea, the least letter or tittle of holy writ, that bears substance or charge. And dispute they not of the holiness of men now living in this mortal life, for they know not thereon, and it is reserved only for God's doom. If they know any notable fault of the translators, or the helpers of them, let them blame the default with charity and mercy; and let them never condemn a thing that may be done lawfully by God's law, as wearing of a good cloth for a time, either riding on a horse for a great journey, when they know not wherefore it is done. For such things may be done by simple men with as great charity and virtue, as by some that hold them great and wise, and can ride in a gilt saddle, or use cushions and beds, and clothes of gold and of silk, with other vanities of the world.

* The church of Rome.

May God grant pity, mercy, and charity, and love of common profit, and put away such dooms as are against reason and charity.

Yet worldly clerks ask greatly, What spirit maketh idiots hardy to translate now the bible into English, since the four great doctors durst never do this? This reply is so ignorant that it needs no answer, nought but stillness, or courteous scorn. For these great doctors were not Englishmen, neither were they conversant among Englishmen, neither knew they the language of Englishmen. But they never ceased till they had holy writ in their mother tongue of their own people. For Jerome, who was a Latin man of birth, translated the bible, both out of Hebrew and out of Greek, into Latin, and expounded full much thereto. And Augustine, and many more Latins, expounded the bible for many parts into Latin, to Latin men, among whom they dwelled. And Latin was a common language to their people about Rome, and beyond; as English is common language to our people. And at this day the common people in Italy speak a corrupt Latin, as true men say that have been in Italy. And the number of translators out of Greek into Latin passes man's knowing, as Augustine witnesses in the second book of christian teaching, and saith thus; "The translators out of Hebrew into Greek may be numbered; but Latin translators, or they that translated into Latin, may not be numbered in any manner." For in the first times of faith, each man, as a Greek book came to him, and as he seemed to himself to have some knowledge of Greek and of Latin, was bold to translate. And this thing helped more than it hindered understanding, if readers were not negligent. For why? The beholding of many books hath showed oft, or declared some darker sentences. Thus saith Augustine there. Therefore Grosthead saith, that it was God's will that divers men translated, and that divers translations are in the church; for where one said darkly, one or more said the same openly.

Since, in the beginning of faith, so many men translated into Latin, and to great profit of Latin men, let one simple creature of God translate into English for the profit of Englishmen. For if worldly clerks look well to their chronicle and books, they shall find that Bede translated the bible, and expounded much in Saxon, that was English, or the common language in this land in his time. And not

only Bede, but also king Alfred, who founded Oxford, translated in his last days the beginning of the Psalter into Saxon, and would have done more if he had lived longer. Also Frenchmen, Bemers, and Britons, have the bible and other books of devotion, and of exposition, translated in their mother language. Why should not Englishmen have the same in their mother language? I cannot tell. Only for falseness and negligence of clerks, or that our people is not worthy to have so great grace and gift of God in pain of their old sins. God for his mercy amend these evil causes, and make our people to have and know and keep truly holy writ, in life and death.

But in translating of words that have many significations under one letter, may be peril. Therefore a translator hath great need to study well the sentence, both before and after, and look that such words accord with the sentence. And he hath need to live a holy life, and to be full devout in prayers; and have not his mind occupied about worldly things, that the Holy Spirit, author of wisdom, and knowledge, and truth, lead him in his work, and suffer him not to err.

Many adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions are set oft one for another, and sometimes at free choice of authors. And now these should be taken as accords best to the sentence. By this manner, with good living and great travail, men may come to truth and clear translating, and true understanding of holy writ, seem it ever so hard at the beginning. God grant to us all to learn well and keep well holy writ, and to suffer joyfully some pain for it at the last. Amen.

THE

EXAMINATION AND DEATH

OF THE BLESSED MARTYR OF CHRIST,

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM,

ABRIDGED FROM THE COLLECTION OF JOHN BALE OUT OF THE BOOKS AND WRITINGS OF THOSE POPISH PRELATES THAT WERE PRESENT AT HIS CONDEMNATION AND JUDGMENT.

In the latter time shall many be chosen, proved and purified by fire, yet shall the ungodly live wickedly still, and have no understanding, Dan. xii.

Fox mentions that the book of John Bale, "then newly come over," was put into the hands of Hall, when engaged in compiling his chronicle; who was so satisfied by the statements of Bale and the authorities alleged by him, as to cancel what he had written before against sir John Oldcastle and his fellows. The history was compiled principally from the register of archbishop Arundel, which is printed in Fox, and still remains in the library at Lambeth palace. Other documents equally authentic and indisputable were referred to. In the following pages a few passages of the original work, chiefly historical reflections, are omitted

THE EXAMINATION AND DEATH OF THE BLESSED MARTYR OF CHRIST,

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, THE LORD COBHAM.

After the death of Wickliff, archbishop Arundel and the romish clergy of England used their utmost efforts in support of the popish errors. They concluded that "it was almost impossible for them to make whole Christ's coat without seam," (as they said, meaning thereby their patched popish synagogue,) unless certain great men were brought out of the way, who seemed to be the chief maintainers of the disciples of Wickliff.

Sir John Oldcastle, lord Cobham, was well known to be a mighty maintainer of suspected preachers, and they resolved to proceed against him as a pernicious heretic. Him they accused first as a mighty maintainer of suspected preachers in the diocese of London, Rochester, and Hereford, also to have assisted them there by force of arms, notwithstanding their synodical constitutions made to the contrary. Lastly, they accused him that he was far otherwise in belief of the sacrament of the altar, of penance, pilgrimage, image worshipping, and the ecclesiastical power, than the holy church of Rome had taught many years before.

Considering that the lord Cobham was a man of great birth, and in favour at that time with the king, their counsel was first to know the king's mind. The archbishop, Thomas Arundel, with his other bishops, and a great part of the clergy, went to the king, and laid most grievous complaints against lord Cobham.* The king gently heard those blood-thirsty prelates; and far otherwise than became his princely dignity; but he earnestly desired them, that, in respect of his noble stock and knighthood, they should yet favourably deal with him; and that they would, if it were possible, without rigour, or extreme handling, reduce him again to the church's unity. He promised them also, that in case they were not contented to take some deliberation, he would seriously commune with him. Afterwards the king sent for lord Cobham; and, as he was come, he called

* A book of Wickliff's belonging to lord Cobham was discovered at this time at a limner's in Paternoster-row, where it had been sent to be bound and ornamented.

him secretly, admonishing him to submit himself to his mother the holy church, and, as an obedient child, to acknowledge himself culpable.

Unto whom the christian knight made this answer, You, most worthy prince, said he, I am always prompt and willing to obey, for so much as I know you to be a christian king, and the appointed minister of God, bearing the sword to the punishment of all evil doers, and for the safeguard of them that be virtuous. Unto you, next to my eternal God, owe I my whole obedience, and submit me thereunto, as I have done ever, all that I have, either of fortune or nature, ready at all times to fulfil whatsoever you shall in that Lord command me. But as touching the pope, and his spiritualty, truly I owe them neither suit nor service; for so much as I know him by the scriptures to be the great antichrist, the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination standing in the holy place. When the king had heard this, with such like sentences more, he would talk no longer with him, but left him utterly.

And, as the archbishop resorted again unto the king for an answer, he gave him full authority to cite the lord Cobham, examine him, and punish him, according to the decrees, which they call the laws of holy church. Then the said archbishop, by the counsel of his other bishops and clergy, appointed to call before him lord Cobham. So sent he forth his chief summoner, with a very sharp citation unto the castle of Cowling. And when the said summoner was come thither, he durst in no case enter the gates of so noble a man, without his license, and therefore he returned home again, his message not done. Then called the archbishop one John Butler unto him, who was then the doorkeeper of the king's privy chamber, and with him he covenanted, through promises and rewards, to have this matter craftily brought to pass under the king's name. Whereupon the said John Butler took the archbishop's summoner with him, and went unto lord Cobham, showing him, that it was the king's pleasure that he should obey that citation, and so cited him fraudulently. Then said he unto them in few words, that in no case would he consent to those most devilish practices of the priests. As they had informed the archbishop of that answer, and that it was for no man privately to cite him after that, without peril of life; he decreed by and by to have him cited by public process, or open commandment. And in all the haste possible, in September,

1413, he commanded letters citatory to be set upon the great gates of the cathedral church of Rochester, which was but three English miles from thence, charging lord Cobham to appear personally before him at Leeds in the eleventh day of the same month and year, all excuses to the contrary set apart. Those letters were taken down soon after, by such as bore favour unto the lord Cobham, and so conveyed aside. After that the archbishop caused new letters to be set up on the nativity day of our lady, which also were rent down, and utterly consumed.

Then, as he did not appear at the day appointed at Leeds castle, (in Kent,) the archbishop judged him, denounced him, and condemned him of contumacy.

This most constant servant of the Lord, and worthy knight, sir John Oldcastle, the lord Cobham, beholding the unappeasable fury of antichrist, thus kindled against him, perceiving himself also compassed on every side with deadly dangers, took paper and pen in hand, and wrote a christian confession of his faith, which follows hereafter, and both signed and sealed it with his own hand. Wherein he also answered to the chief articles the archbishop laid against him. That done, he took the copy with him, and went therewith to the king, trusting to find mercy and favour at his hand. That confession of his was none other than the common belief, or sum of the church's faith, called the apostle's creed, of all christian men then used. As thus:

The Christian Belief of the lord Cobham.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, which was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, crucified, dead and buried; went down to hell, the third day rose again from death, ascended up to heaven, sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and from thence shall come again to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the universal holy church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the uprising of the flesh, and everlasting life. Amen.

And for a more large declaration of this my faith in the catholic church, I stedfastly believe that there is but one God Almighty, in and of whose Godhead are these three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three persons are the selfsame God Almighty. I believe

also that the second person of this most blessed Trinity, in the most convenient time appointed thereunto, took flesh and blood of the most blessed virgin Mary, for the safeguard and redemption of the universal kind of man, which was before lost in Adam's offence. Moreover I believe that the same Jesus Christ our Lord, thus being both God and man, is the only head of the whole christian church, and that all those that have been or shall be saved, are members of this most holy church. And this holy church I think to be divided into three sorts or companies.

Whereof the first sort are now in heaven, and they are the saints from hence departed. These, as they were here conversant, conformed always their lives to the most holy laws and pure examples of Christ, renouncing Satan, the world, and the flesh with all their concupiscences and evils. The second sort are in purgatory, if any such there be by the scriptures, abiding the mercy of God and a full deliverance of pain.* The third sort are here upon the earth, and are called, The church militant; for day and night they contend against the crafty assaults of the devil, the flattering prosperities of this world, and the rebellious filthiness of the flesh.

This latter congregation, by the just ordinance of God, is also severed into three divers estates; that is to say, into priesthood, knighthood, and the commons. Among whom the will of God is, that the one should aid the other, but not destroy the other. The priests, first of all, secluded from all worldliness, should conform their lives wholly to the examples of Christ and his apostles. Evermore should they be occupied in preaching and teaching the scriptures purely, and in giving wholesome examples of good living to the other two degrees of men. More modest also, more loving, gentle, and lowly in spirit should they be than any other sorts of people.

In knighthood, are all they which bear sword by law of office. These should defend God's laws, and see that the gospel is purely taught, conforming their lives to the same, and secluding all false preachers.† Yea, these ought rather to hazard their lives than to suffer such wicked decrees as either blemish the eternal testament of God, or

* From Walden it appears that lord Cobham wrote against the doctrine of purgatory. See also Wickliff, p. 40.

† The knights or military men of rank were taught that it was their particular duty to defend the church.

yet hinder the free passage thereof, whereby heresies and schisms might spring in the church. For of none other arise they, as I suppose, than of erroneous constitutions, craftily first creeping in under hypocritical lies, for advantage. They ought also to preserve God's people from oppressors, tyrants, and thieves, and to see the clergy supported, so long as they teach purely, pray rightly, and minister the sacraments freely. And, if they see them do otherwise, they are bound, by law of office, to compel them to change their doings, and to see all things performed according to God's prescript ordinance.

The latter fellowship of this church are the common people, whose duty is to bear their good minds and true obedience to the aforesaid ministers of God, their kings, civil governors, and priests. The right office of these, is justly to occupy every man in his faculty, be it merchandise, handicraft, or the tilling of the ground. And so one of them to be as a helper to another, following always in their sorts the just commandments of their Lord God.

Over and besides all this, I most faithfully believe that the sacraments of Christ's church are necessary to all christian believers, this always seen to, that they are truly ministered according to Christ's first institution and ordinance. And forsomuch as I am maliciously and most falsely accused of a misbelief in the sacrament of the altar, to the hurtful slander of many, I signify here unto all men, that this is my faith concerning that. I believe in that sacrament to be contained very Christ's body and blood under the similitudes of bread and wine, yea, the same body that was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of Mary the virgin, done on the cross, died, that was buried, arose the third day from the death, and is now glorified in heaven. I also believe the universal law of God to be most true and perfect, and they which do not follow it in their faith and works, at one time or other, can never be saved. Whereas, he that seeketh it in faith, accepteth it, learneth it, delighteth therein, and performeth it in love, shall taste for it the felicity of everlasting innocence.

Finally, This is my faith also, that God will require no more of a christian believer in this life, than to obey the precepts of that most blessed law. If any prelate of the church require more, or any other kind of obedience, than this to be used, he contemns Christ, exalting himself above God, and so becomes an open antichrist. All these premises

I believe particularly, and generally all that God hath left in his holy scriptures that I should believe. Instantly desiring you, my liege lord and most worthy king, that this confession of mine may be justly examined by the most godly, wise, and learned men of your realm. And, if it be found in all points agreeing to the verity, then let it be so allowed, and I thereupon holden for none other than a true christian. If it be proved otherwise, then let it be utterly condemned; provided always, that I am taught a better belief by the word of God, and I shall most reverently, at all times, obey thereunto.

This brief confession of his faith the lord Cobham wrote, and took it to the court, offering it with all meekness unto the king to read. The king would not receive it, but commanded it to be delivered unto them that should be his judges. Then desired he in the king's presence, that an hundred knights and esquires might be suffered to come in upon his purgation, who, he knew, would clear him of all heresies. Moreover, he offered himself after the law of arms, to fight for life or death with any man living, christian or heathen, in the quarrel of his faith, the king and the lords of his council excepted.* Finally, with all gentleness he protested before all who were present, that he would refuse no manner of correction which should, after the laws of God, be ministered unto him; but that he would at all times with all meekness obey it.

Notwithstanding all this, the king suffered him to be summoned personally in his own privy chamber. Then said lord Cobham to the king, that he had appealed from the archbishop to the pope of Rome, and therefore he ought, he said, in no case to be his judge. And, having his appeal there at hand ready written, he showed it with all reverence to the king. Wherewith the king was then much more displeased than before, and said angrily unto him, that he should not pursue his appeal; but rather he should tarry in hold,† till such time as it were of the pope allowed. And then, willed he or nilled he, the archbishop should be his judge. Thus was there nothing allowed that the good lord Cobham had lawfully required. But as he would not be sworn in all things to submit himself to the church, and

* This offer, strange as it may appear, was quite consistent with the practice and the laws of that age.

† In prison.

so to take what penance the archbishop would enjoin him, he was arrested again, at the king's commandment, and led to the tower of London, to keep his day, which the archbishop had appointed him in the king's chamber.

Then caused he the aforesaid confession of his faith to be copied again, and the answer also, which he had made to the four articles propounded against him, to be written in manner of an indenture, in two sheets of paper; that, when he should come to his answer, he might give the one copy unto the archbishop, and reserve the other to himself. As the day of examination was come, which was the twenty-third day of September, the Saturday after the feast of St. Matthew, Thomas Arundel, the archbishop, sitting in the chapter-house of Paul's, with Richard Clifford, bishop of London, and Henry Bolingbroke, bishop of Winchester; sir Robert Morley, knight, and lieutenant of the Tower, brought personally before him lord Cobham, and there left him for the time, unto whom the archbishop said these words:

The first examination of the lord Cobham.

Sir John, in the last general convocation of the clergy of this our province, you were detected of certain heresies, and by sufficient witnesses found culpable. Whereupon you were by form of spiritual law cited, and would in no case appear. In conclusion, upon your rebellious contumacy, you were both privately and openly excommunicated. Notwithstanding, we never yet showed ourselves unready to have given you your absolution, nor yet do we to this hour, would ye have meekly asked it.

Unto this the lord Cobham showed as though he had given no ear, having his mind otherwise occupied; and so desired no absolution. But he said, he would gladly, before him and his brethren, make rehearsal of that faith, which he held and intended always to stand to, if it would please them to license him thereunto. And then he took out of his bosom a certain writing indented, concerning the articles whereof he was accused, and so openly read it before them, giving it unto the archbishop, as he had made thereof an end.—Whereof this is the copy.

I John Oldcastle, knight, lord of Cobham, will all christian men to understand, that Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, hath not only laid it to my charge

maliciously, but also very untruly by his letter and seal, written against me in most slanderous wise, that I should otherwise feel and teach of the sacraments of the church, assigning especially the sacrament of the altar, the sacrament of penance, the worshipping of images, and the going of pilgrimage unto them, far otherwise than either believeth or teacheth the universal holy church. I take almighty God unto witness, that it hath been and now is, and evermore, with the help of God, it shall be, my full intent and will, to believe faithfully and wholly, all the sacraments that ever God ordained to be ministered in the holy church.

And moreover for to declare me in these four points, afore rehearsed—I believe that, in the most worshipful sacrament of the altar, is Christ's very body in form of bread, the same body that was born of the blessed virgin Mary, done on the cross, dead, and buried, and that the third day arose from death to life, the which body is now glorified with the Father in heaven. And as for the sacrament of penance, I believe that it is needful to all them that shall be saved, to forsake their sin and to do penance for it, with true contrition to God, confession of their faults, and due satisfaction in Christ, like as God's laws limit and teach, else can they have no salvation. This penance I desire all men to do.

And, as for images, I understand that they pertain nothing to our christian belief, but were permitted, long since the faith was given us of Christ, by sufferance of the church, for to be as calendars unto laymen to represent or bring to mind the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the martyrdom and good living of the saints. I think also that whatsoever he is which doth that worship to dead images, that is duly belonging unto God, or that putteth faith, hope, or confidence in the help of them, as he should do only in his eternal living God, or that hath affection in one more than in another, he perpetrateth, in so doing, the abominable sin of idolatry.

Moreover, in this am I fully persuaded, that every man dwelling on this earth is a pilgrim, either towards bliss or else towards pain. And that he which knoweth not, nor will know, nor yet keep the holy commandments of God in his living here, albeit that he goeth on pilgrimage into all quarters of the world, if he departeth so, he shall surely be damned. Again, he that knoweth the holy commandments of God, and so performeth them to the end of his life to his

power, shall without fail be saved in Christ,* though he never in his life go on pilgrimage, as men use now-a-days, to Canterbury, Walsingham, Compostella, and Rome, or to any other places.

This answer to his articles thus ended and read, lord Cobham delivered to the bishops. Then counselled the archbishop with the other two bishops and divers of the doctors, what was to be done, commanding him to stand aside.

In conclusion, by their assent and information, the archbishop said thus unto him:

Come hither, sir John. In this your writing are many good things contained, and right catholic also, we deny it not; but ye must consider that this day was appointed you to answer to other points concerning those articles, whereof as yet no mention is made in this your bill; and therefore you must yet declare us your mind more plainly. As thus, whether that ye hold, affirm, and believe, that in the sacrament of the altar, after the consecration rightly done by a priest, remaineth material bread or not? Moreover, whether ye do hold, affirm, and believe that as concerning the sacrament of penance, where there are a competent number of priests, every christian man is necessarily bound to be confessed of his sins to a priest ordained by the church, or not?

After certain other communication, this was the answer of the good lord Cobham; That none otherwise would he declare his mind, nor yet answer unto his articles, than was expressly in his writing there contained.

Then said the archbishop, Sir John, beware what you do; for, if ye answer not clearly to those things that are here objected against you, especially at the time appointed you only for that purpose, the law of holy church is, that, compelled† once by a judge, we may openly proclaim you a heretic.

Unto whom he gave this answer: Do as ye shall think it best, for I am at a point.

Whatsoever he or the other bishops did ask him after that, he bade them resort to his bill, for thereby would he stand to the very death. Other answer would he not give that day, wherewith the bishops and prelates were in a

* Note, here is no mention of purgatory; we are saved in Christ without purgatory.—*Fox.* This reply of lord Cobham, in Fox, has some verbal differences from the copy in Bale which is here followed.

† Being examined.

manner amazed and wonderfully disquieted. At the last, the archbishop counselled again with his other bishops and doctors. And in the end thereof declared unto him, what the holy church of Rome, following the sayings of Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and of other holy doctors, had determined in the said matter, no manner of mention once made of Christ; which determination he said all christian men ought both to believe and to follow.

Then said lord Cobham, that he would gladly both believe and observe whatsoever the holy church of Christ's institution had determined, or whatsoever God had willed him either to believe, or to do. But that the pope of Rome, with his cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and other prelates of that church, had lawful power to determine such matters as stood not with God's word throughly, that would he not, he said, at that time affirm. The archbishop bade him then take good advisement till the Monday next following, which was the twenty-fifth day of September, and then justly to answer, especially unto this point, Whether there remained material bread in the sacrament of the altar, after the words of consecration, or not? He promised him also to send unto him, in writing, those matters clearly determined, that he might be the more perfect in his answer-making. And all this was for nothing else but to blind the multitude with somewhat. The next day following, according to his promise, the archbishop sent unto him, into the Tower, this foolish and blasphemous writing, made by him, and by his unlearned clergy.

"The faith and determination of the holy church, touching the blissful sacrament of the altar, is this, That, after the sacramental words are once spoken by a priest, in his mass, the material bread, that was before bread, is turned into Christ's very body; and the material wine, that was before wine, is turned into Christ's very blood. And so there remaineth in the sacrament of the altar from thenceforth, no material bread, nor material wine, which were there before the sacramental words were spoken. How believe ye this article?

"Holy church hath determined, that every christian man, living here bodily upon earth, ought to be shriven* to a priest, ordained by the church, if he may come to him. How feel ye this article?

* Confessed.

"Christ ordained St. Peter the apostle to be his vicar here in earth, whose see is the holy church of Rome. And he granted, that the same power, which he gave unto Peter, should succeed to all Peter's successors, whom we call now popes of Rome. By whose special power, in particular churches are ordained prelates, as archbishops, bishops, parsons, curates, and other degrees more; unto whom christian men ought to obey, after the laws of the church of Rome. This is the determination of holy church. How feel ye this article?

"Holy church hath determined that it is meritorious to a christian man to go on pilgrimage to holy places, and there especially to worship holy relics, and images of saints, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and all other saints besides, approved by the church of Rome. How feel ye this article?"

As the good lord Cobham read over this most wretched writing, he marvelled greatly at their ignorance. He perceived hereby, that their uttermost malice was purposed against him, howsoever he should answer; and therefore he put his life into the hands of God, desiring his only Spirit to assist him in his next answer. When the 25th day was come, Thomas Arundel, the archbishop of Canterbury, commanded his judicial seat to be removed from the chapter-house of Paul's to the Dominican Friars, within Ludgate, at London. And as he was there set with the bishops, he called unto him his council and his officers, with divers other doctors and friars; also two notaries, appointed there purposely to write all that should be said or done. All these, with a great sort more of priests, monks, canons, friars, parish clerks, bell-ringers, and pardoners, disdained lord Cobham with innumerable mocks and scorns, reckoning him to be a horrible heretic, and a man accursed before God.

Anon, the archbishop called for a mass-book, and caused all those prelates and doctors to swear thereupon, that every man should faithfully do his office and duty that day. And that neither for favour nor fear, love nor hate, of the one party nor the other, any thing should there be witnessed, spoken, or done, but according to the truth, as they would answer before God, and all the world, at the day of doom. Then were the two aforesaid notaries sworn also to write and to witness the words and process, that there should be uttered on both parties, and to say their minds, if they

otherwise knew, before they should register it. And all this dissimulation was but to colour their mischief before the ignorant multitude.

After that came before them sir Robert Morley, knt. lieutenant of the Tower, and he brought with him the good lord Cobham, there leaving him among them, as a lamb among wolves, to his examination and answer.

The latter examination of the lord Cobham.

Then said the archbishop, Lord Cobham, you are advised, I am sure, of the words and process which we had unto you, upon Saturday last past, in the chapterhouse of Paul's; which process were now too long to be rehearsed again. I said unto you then, that you were accursed* for your contumacy and disobedience to holy church, thinking that you should, with meekness, have desired your absolution.

Then spake the lord Cobham, with a most cheerful countenance, God saith by his holy prophet, I shall curse, where you bless.

The archbishop continued his tale, saying: Sir, at that time I gently proffered to have assoiled† you, if you would have asked it; and yet I do the same, if you will humbly desire it in due form and manner, as holy church hath ordained.

Then said lord Cobham, Nay, forsooth, will I not; for I never yet trespassed against you, and therefore I will not do it. And with that he kneeled down on the pavement, holding up his hands towards heaven, and said, I confess me here unto thee, my eternal, living God, that, in my frail youth, I offended thee, O Lord, most grievously in pride, wrath, and gluttony, in covetousness and lechery. Many men have I hurt in mine anger, and have done many other horrible sins—Good Lord, I ask THEE mercy. And therewith, weepingly, he stood up again, and said, with a mighty voice, Lo, good people, lo; for the breaking of God's law, and HIS great commandments, they‡ never yet cursed me; but, for their own laws and traditions, most cruelly do they handle both me and other men; and therefore, both they and their laws, by the promise of God, shall utterly be destroyed.

At this, the archbishop and his company were not a little abashed. Notwithstanding he took courage again, after

* Excommunicated. † Pardoned, or absolved.
‡ The popish ecclesiastics.

certain words had in excuse of their tyranny, and examined the lord Cobham of his christian belief.

Lord Cobham made this godly answer: I believe fully and faithfully the universal laws of God. I believe that all is true which is contained in the holy sacred scriptures of the bible. Finally, I believe all that my Lord God would I should believe.

Then demanded the archbishop an answer of the bill, which he and the clergy had sent him into the Tower the day before, of a determination of the church concerning the four articles whereof he was accused, especially for the sacrament of the altar, how he believed therein?

Whereunto lord Cobham said, that with that bill he had nothing to do. But this was his belief, he said, concerning the sacrament: That his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, sitting at his last supper, with his most dear disciples, the night before he should suffer, took bread in his hand, and, giving thanks to his eternal Father, blessed it, brake it, and so gave it unto them, saying, Take it unto ye, and eat thereof all; this is my body which shall be betrayed for you; do this hereafter in my remembrance. This do I thoroughly believe, said he, for this faith am I taught of the gospel, in Matthew, in Mark, and in Luke, and also in the first epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

Then asked the archbishop, if he believed that it were bread after the consecration or sacramental words spoken over it.

The lord Cobham said, I believe that in the sacrament of the altar is Christ's very body, in form of bread, the same that was born of the virgin Mary, done on the cross, dead and buried, and that the third day arose from death to life, which now is glorified in heaven.

Then said one of the doctors of the law, After the sacramental words are uttered, there remaineth no bread, but only the body of Christ.

Lord Cobham said then to one master John Whitehead, You said once unto me in the castle of Cowling, that the sacred host was not Christ's body; but I held then against you, and proved that therein was his body, though the seculars and friars could not therein agree, but held each one against other in that opinion. These were my words then, if ye remember it.

Then shouted a number of them together, and cried with a great noise, We say all, it is God's body. And divers of

them asked him in great anger, Whether it were material bread after the consecration, or not?

Then looked the lord Cobham earnestly upon the archbishop, and said, I believe surely that it is Christ's body in form of bread. Sir, believe not you thus?

And the archbishop said, Yes, truly do I.

Then asked the doctors, Whether it were only Christ's body after the consecration of a priest, and no bread, or not?

And he said unto them, It is both Christ's body and bread. I shall prove it as thus; for like as Christ, dwelling here upon the earth, had in him both Godhead and manhood; and had the invisible Godhead covered under that manhood, which was only visible and seen in him; so, in the sacrament of the altar, is Christ's very body and very bread also, as I believe the bread is the thing that we see with our eyes; the body of Christ, which is his flesh and his blood, is thereunder hidden, and not seen but in faith. To this he added other words from Gelasius.

Then smiled they each one upon the other, that the people should judge him taken in a great heresy. And with a great brag divers of them said, It is a foul heresy.

Then asked the archbishop, What bread it was? The doctors also inquired of him, Whether it were material or not?

Lord Cobham said unto them, The scriptures make no mention of this word, "material," and therefore my faith hath nothing to do therewith; but this I say and believe, that it is Christ's body and bread, for Christ said in the sixth of John's gospel, I, which came down from heaven, am the living and not the dead bread. Therefore, I say now again, like as I said before, as our Lord Jesus Christ is very God and very man, so, in the most blessed sacrament of the altar, is Christ's very body and bread.

Then said they all with one voice, It is a heresy.

One of the bishops stood up by and by, and said, What! It is a manifest heresy to say that it is bread after the sacramental word is once spoken, but Christ's body only.

Lord Cobham said, St. Paul the apostle was, I am sure, as wise as you are now, and more godly learned; and he called it bread, writing to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. x. The bread that we break, saith he, is it not the partaking of the body of Christ? Lo, he calleth it bread and not Christ's body, but a mean whereby we receive Christ's body.

Then said they again, Paul must be otherwise understood;

for it is surely a heresy to say that it is bread after the consecration, but only Christ's body.

Lord Cobham asked, How they could make good that sentence? They answered, It is against the determination of the holy church.

Then said the archbishop unto him, Sir John, we sent you a writing concerning the faith of this blessed sacrament, clearly determined by the church of Rome our mother, and by the holy doctors.

Then said Lord Cobham, I know none holier than is Christ and his apostles; and as for that determination, it is none of theirs, for it standeth not with the scriptures, but manifestly against them. If it be of the church, as ye say it is, it hath been hers only since she received the great poison of worldly possessions, and not before.

Then asked they him, to stop his mouth therewith, If he believed not in the determination of the church?

And he said unto them, No, forsooth, for it is no God. In all our creed IN is but thrice mentioned, concerning belief; IN God the Father, IN God the Son, IN God the Holy Ghost, three persons and one God. The birth, the death, the burial, the resurrection, and ascension of Christ, hath none IN for belief, but IN him. Neither yet hath the church, the sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, the latter resurrection, nor yet the life everlasting any other IN, than IN the Holy Ghost.

Then said one of the lawyers, Tush, that was but a word of office. But what is your belief concerning holy church?

Lord Cobham answered, My belief is, as I said before, that all the scriptures of the sacred bible are true. All that is grounded upon them I believe thoroughly; for I know, it is God's pleasure that I should so do. But in your lordly laws and idle determinations have I no belief; for ye are no part of Christ's holy church, as your open deeds show. But ye are very antichrists, obstinately set against his holy law and will. The laws, that ye have made, are nothing to his glory, but only for your vain glory and abominable covetousness.

This they said, and that in a great fume, was an exceeding heresy, not to believe the determination of holy church. Then the archbishop asked, what he thought holy church was.

He said, My belief is, that holy church is the number of them which shall be saved, of whom Christ is the head. Of this church, one part is in heaven with Christ, another in

purgatory, you say, and the third is here in earth. This latter part standeth in three degrees, in knighthood, priesthood, and the commonalty, as I said before plainly, in the confession of my belief.

Then said the archbishop, Can you tell me, who is of this church?

Lord Cobham answered, Yea, truly can I.

Then said doctor Walden, the prior of the Carmelites, It is a doubt unto you who is thereof; for Christ saith in Matthew, Presume to judge no man. If ye here are forbidden the judgment of your neighbour or brother, much more the judgment of your superior.

Lord Cobham made him this answer, Christ saith also in the same chapter of Matthew, that, like as the evil tree is known by its evil fruit, so is a false prophet by his works, appear they ever so glorious; but that ye left behind ye. And in John he hath this text, Believe you the outward doings? And in another place of John, When we know the thing to be true, we may so judge it, and not offend; for David saith also, Judge rightly always, ye children of men. And as for your superiority, were ye of Christ, ye should be meek ministers, and no proud superiors.

Then said doctor Walden unto him, Ye make here no difference of judgments; ye put no diversity between the evil judgments, which Christ hath forbidden, and the good judgments, which he hath commanded us to have; rash judgment and right judgment, all is one with you; so is judgment presumed, and judgment of office; so swift judges always are the learned scholars of Wickliff.

Unto whom lord Cobham thus answered; It is well sophistered of you; preposterous are your judgments evermore; for, as the prophet Isaiah saith, Ye judge evil good, and good evil; and therefore the same prophet concludeth, that your ways are not God's ways, nor God's ways your ways. And as for that virtuous man Wickliff, whose judgments ye so highly disdain, I shall say here for my part, both before God and man, that before I knew that despised doctrine of his, I never abstained from sin. But since I learned therein to fear my Lord God, it hath otherwise, I trust, been with me; so much grace could I never find in all your glorious instructions.

Then said doctor Walden, It were not well with me, so many virtuous men living, and so many learned men teaching, the scriptures being also so open, and the examples of

fathers so plenteous, if I had no grace to amend my life till I heard the devil preach! St. Jerome saith, that he which seeketh such suspected masters, shall not find the mid-day light, but the mid-day devil.

Lord Cobham said, Your fathers, the old pharisees, ascribed Christ's miracles to Beelzebub, and his doctrine to the devil; and you, as their natural children, have still the same judgment, concerning his faithful followers. They that rebuke your vicious living must needs be heretics! and that must your doctors prove when ye have no scriptures to do it. Then said he to them all, To judge you as ye are, we need no further go than your own proper acts. Where do ye find in all God's laws, that ye should thus sit in judgment on any christian men, or yet sentence any other man unto death, as ye do here daily? No ground have ye in all the scriptures so lordly to take it upon ye, but in Annas and in Caiaphas, who sat thus upon Christ, and upon his apostles after his ascension. Of them only have ye taken to judge Christ's members, as ye do, and not of Peter or John.

Then said some of the lawyers, Yes, forsooth, sir, for Christ judged Judas.

Lord Cobham said, No, Christ judged him not, but he judged himself, and thereupon went forth, and so did hang himself. But, indeed, Christ said, "Wo unto him," for that covetous act of his—as he doth yet still unto many of you; for since his venom was shed into the church, ye never followed Christ; neither yet have ye stood in the perfection of God's law.

The archbishop asked, what he meant by that venom.

Lord Cobham said, Your possessions and lordships. For then cried an angel in the air, as your own chronicles mention, "Wo, wo, wo, this day is venom shed in the church of God."* Before that time all the bishops of Rome were martyrs, in a manner; and since that time we read of very few. But indeed, since that same time one hath put down another, one hath poisoned another, one hath cursed another, and one hath slain another, and done much more mischief besides, as all the chronicles tell. And let all men consider well this, that Christ was meek and merciful; the pope is proud and a tyrant. Christ was poor and forgave; the pope is rich and a most cruel manslayer, as his daily

* Ranulphus Cestrensis in Polychron. lib. iv. c. 26. The venom alluded to was the grant of privileges and worldly possessions to the church by the emperor Constantine. It is often mentioned by the early reformers.

acts do prove him. Rome is the very nest of antichrist; and out of that nest come all his disciples. Of whom prelates, priests, and monks are the body, and these shorn friars are the tail, which covereth his most filthy part.

Then said the prior of the friars Augustines, Alack, sir, why do ye say so? That is uncharitably spoken.

Lord Cobham said, Not only is it my saying, but also of the prophet Isaiah, long before my time. The prophet saith, He which preacheth lies, is the tail behind, Isa. ix. As you friars and monks are like the pharisees, divided in your outward apparel and usages, so make ye division among the people; and thus you, with such other, are the very natural members of antichrist. Christ saith in his gospel, "Wo to you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites; for ye close up the kingdom of heaven before men, neither enter ye in yourselves, nor yet suffer any other that would enter into it." But ye stop up the ways thereunto with your own traditions, and therefore are ye the household of antichrist; ye will not permit God's verity to have passage, nor yet to be taught of his true ministers, fearing to have your wickedness reproved. But, by such vain flatterers as uphold you in your mischiefs, ye suffer the common people most miserably to be seduced.

Then said the archbishop, By our lady, sir, there shall none such preaching within my diocese, if God will, nor yet in my jurisdiction, if I may know it, as either make division or dissension among the poor commons.

Lord Cobham said, Both Christ and his apostles were accused of sedition making, yet were they most peaceable men. Both Daniel and Christ prophesied, that such a troublous time should come, as hath not been yet since the world's beginning. And this prophecy is partly fulfilled in your days and doings. For many have ye slain already, and more will ye slay hereafter, if God fulfil not his promise. Christ saith also, If those days of yours were not shortened, scarcely should any flesh be saved. Therefore look for it justly, for God will shorten your days. Moreover, though priests and deacons, for preaching of God's word, and for ministering the sacraments, with provision for the poor, are grounded in God's law, yet have these other sects no manner of ground thereof, so far as I have read.

Then a doctor of law, master John Kemp, plucked out of his bosom a copy of that bill, which they had before sent him into the Tower, by the archbishop's counsel, thinking

thereby to make shorter work with him. For they were so amazed with his answers, not unlike to them which disputed with Stephen, that they knew not well how to occupy the time, their wits and sophistry, as God would, so failed them that day.

My lord Cobham, said this doctor, we must briefly know your mind concerning these four points here following. The first of them is this—and then he read upon the bill. The faith and the determination of holy church, touching the blessed sacrament of the altar, is this: that after the sacramental words are once spoken by a priest in his mass, the material bread, that was before bread, is turned into Christ's very body. And the material wine that was before wine, is turned into Christ's very blood. And so there remaineth in the sacrament of the altar from thenceforth no material bread, nor material wine, which were there before the sacramental words were spoken. Sir, believe ye not this?

Lord Cobham said, This is not my belief. But my faith is, as I said to you before, that in the worshipful sacrament of the altar, is very Christ's body in form of bread.

Then said the archbishop, Sir John, ye must say otherwise.

Lord Cobham said, Nay, that I shall not, if God be upon my side, as I trust he is, but that there is Christ's body in form of bread, as the common belief is.

Then read the doctor: The second point is this. Holy church hath determined that every christian man living here bodily upon earth, ought to be shriven to a priest ordained by the church, if he may come to him. Sir, what say ye to this?

Lord Cobham, said, A diseased or sorely wounded man had need to have a wise and true surgeon, knowing both the ground and the danger of the same. Most necessary were it, therefore, to be first shriven unto God, who only knoweth our diseases and can help us. I deny not in this the going to a priest, if he be a man of good life and learning; for the laws of God are to be required of the priest, who is godly learned. But if he be an idiot or a man of vicious living that is my curate, I ought rather to flee from him, than to seek unto him. For sooner might I catch evil of him that is nought, than any goodness towards my soul's health.

Then read the doctor: The third point is this. Christ ordained St. Peter the apostle to be his vicar here in earth, whose see is the church of Rome. And he granted that the same power, which he gave unto Peter, should succeed

to all Peter's successors, whom we call now popes of Rome. By whose special power in churches particular are ordained prelates, as archbishops, parsons, curates and other degrees more. Unto whom christian men ought to obey, after the laws of the church of Rome. This is the determination of holy church. Sir, believe ye not this?

Lord Cobham answered, He that followeth Peter most nigh in pure living, is next unto him in succession. But your lordly order esteemeth not greatly the lowly behaviour of poor Peter, whatsoever ye prate of him. Neither care ye greatly for the humble manners of them that succeeded him till the time of Sylvester,* who for the more part were martyrs, as I told ye before. Ye can let all their good conditions go by you, and not hurt yourselves with them at all! All the world knoweth this well enough, by you, and yet ye can make boast of Peter.

One of the other doctors asked him; Then what do ye say of the pope?

Lord Cobham answered, As I said before: he and you together make complete the great antichrist. Of whom he is the great head, you bishops, priests, prelates, and monks are the body, and the begging friars are the tail, for they cover the filthiness of you both, with their subtle sophistry. Never will I in my conscience obey any of you all, till I see you, with Peter, follow Christ in conversation.

Then read the doctor: The fourth point is this. Holy church hath determined that it is meritorious to a christian man to go on pilgrimage to holy places. And there especially to worship holy relics and images of saints, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and all other saints besides, approved by the church of Rome. Sir, what say ye to this?

Lord Cobham answered, I owe them no service by any commandment of God, and therefore I mind not to seek them for your covetousness. It were best ye swept them fair from cobwebs and dust, and so laid them up for catching of scathe;† or else bury them fair in the ground, as ye do other aged people, who are God's images. It is a wonderful thing, that saints, now being dead, should become so covetous and needy, and thereupon so bitterly beg, who all their life-time hated all covetousness and begging!

* Sylvester I. was pope from A. D. 314 to 335, in the time of Constantine the great, whose favour and liberality stimulated the ambition of the bishops of Rome.

† Harm.

But this I said unto you, and I would all the world should mark it, That with your shrines and idols, your feigned absolutions and pardons, ye draw unto you the substance, wealth, and chief pleasure of all christian realms.

Why, sir, said one of the clerks, will ye not worship good images?

What worship should I give unto them? said lord Cobham.

Then said friar Palmer unto him, Sir, ye will worship the cross of Christ, that he died upon?

Where is it? said lord Cobham.

The friar said, I put the case, sir, that it were here even now before you?

Lord Cobham answered, This is a great wise man, to put me an earnest question of a thing, and yet he himself knoweth not where the thing itself is! Yet once again ask I you, what worship I should do unto it?

A clerk said unto him, Such worship as Paul speaketh of, and that is this: God forbid that I should joy but only in the cross of Jesus Christ.

Then said lord Cobham, and spread his arms abroad, THIS* is a real cross, yea, and so much better than your cross of wood, in that it was created of God. Yet, I will not seek to have it worshipped.

Then said the bishop of London, Sir, ye wot well that he died on a material cross?

Lord Cobham said, Yea, and I wot also, that our salvation came not in by that material cross, but alone by Him who died thereupon. And well I wot that holy St. Paul rejoiced in none other cross, but in Christ's passion and death only, and in his own sufferings of like persecution with him, for the selfsame verity that he had suffered for before.

Another clerk asked him, Will ye then do no honour to the holy cross?

He answered, Yes, if he were mine, I would lay him up honestly, and see to him, that he should take no more scathes abroad, nor be robbed of his goods as he is now a-days.

Then said the archbishop, Sir John, ye have spoken here many wonderful words to the slanderous rebuke of the whole spiritualty, giving a great evil example unto the common sort, here, to have us in the more disdain. Much

* The human body. The Lollards frequently spoke of it as the only true image of God.

time have we spent here, about you, and all in vain, so far as I can see. Well, we must be now at this short point with you, for the day passeth away; ye must either submit yourself to the ordinance of holy church, or else throw yourself, no remedy, into most deep danger. See to it in time, for else anon it will be too late.

Lord Cobham said, I know not to what purpose I should otherwise submit me. Much more have you offended me, than ever I offended you, in thus troubling me before this multitude.

Then said the archbishop, We once again require you to remember yourself well, and to have none other opinion in these matters, than the universal faith and belief of the holy church of Rome is. And so, like an obedient child to return again to the unity of your mother. See to it, I say, in time, for yet ye may have remedy, whereas anon it will be too late.

Lord Cobham said expressly before them all, I will none otherwise believe in these points, than I have told ye here before. Do with me what ye will.

Finally, the archbishop said, Well then I see none other, but we must needs do the law; we must proceed forth to the sentence definitive, and both judge you and condemn you for a heretic.

With that the archbishop stood up, and read there a bill of his condemnation, all the clergy and laity putting off their bonnets.

After that the archbishop had thus read the bill of his condemnation before the whole multitude, lord Cobham said, with a most cheerful countenance, Though ye judge my body, which is but a wretched thing, yet am I certain and sure, that ye can do no harm to my soul, no more than could Satan upon the soul of Job. He who created that, will of his infinite mercy and promise, save it, I have therein no manner of doubt. And, as concerning these articles before rehearsed, I will stand to them, even to the very death, by the grace of my eternal God.

And therewith he turned him unto the people, casting his hands abroad, and saying with a very loud voice, Good christian people, for God's love be well aware of these men; for they will else beguile you, and lead you blindly into hell with themselves. For Christ sayeth plainly unto you, "If one blind man leadeth another, they are like both to fall into the ditch."

After this, he fell down upon his knees, and thus, before them all, prayed for his enemies, holding up both his hands and his eyes towards heaven, and saying, Lord God eternal, I beseech thee, for thy great mercies' sake, to forgive my pursuers, if it be thy blessed will. And then he was delivered to sir Robert Morley, and so led forth again to the Tower of London. And thus there was an end of that day's work.

While lord Cobham was thus in the Tower, he sent out privily unto his friends. And they, at his desire, wrote this little bill here following, causing it to be set up in divers quarters of London, that the people should not believe the slanders and lies that his enemies, the bishops' servants and priests, had made on him abroad. And this was the letter:

"Forasmuch as sir John Oldcastle, knight, and lord Cobham, is untruly convicted and imprisoned, falsely reported and slandered among the common people by his adversaries, that he should otherwise both feel and speak of the sacraments of the church, and especially of the blessed sacrament of the altar, than was written in the confession of his belief, which was indented and taken to the clergy, and so set up in divers open places in the city of London. Known be it here to all the world, that he never since varied in any point therefrom; but this is plainly his belief, that all the sacraments of the church are profitable and expedient also to all them that shall be saved, taking them after the intent that Christ and his true church hath ordained. Furthermore, he believeth that in the blessed sacrament of the altar is verily and truly Christ's body in form of bread."

After this, the bishops and priests were in much obloquy, both of the nobility and commons, partly for that they had so cruelly handled the good lord Cobham; and partly again, because his opinion, as they thought at that time, was perfect concerning the sacrament. As they feared this to grow to farther inconvenience towards them both ways, they drew their heads together, and, at the last, consented to use another practice somewhat contrary to that they had done before.

They caused it by and by to be blown abroad by their feed servants, friends, and babbling sir Johns,* that the said lord Cobham was become a good man, and had lowly submitted himself in all things unto holy church, utterly changing his opinion concerning the sacrament. And,

* A general name for the priests in those days.

thereupon, they counterfeited an abjuration in his name that the people should take no hold of that opinion, by any thing they had heard of him before, and to stand so in the more awe of them, considering him to be so great a man, and yet by them subdued.*

The complaint of the clergy and the tyrannous act there upon made.

This abjuration never came to the hands of the lord Cobham, neither was it compiled of them for that purpose, but only therewith for a time to blear the eyes of the unlearned multitude. And when they perceived that policy would not help, but made more and more against them, then sought they out another false practice. They went unto the king with a most grievous complaint, like as they did before in his father's time, that in every quarter of the realm, by reason of Wickliff's opinions, and the said lord Cobham, were wonderful contentions, rumours, tumults, uproars, confederations, dissensions, divisions, differences, discords, harms, slanders, schisms, sects, seditions, perturbations, perils, unlawful assemblies, variances, strifes, fightings, rebellious rufflings, and daily insurrections. The church, they said, was hated; the diocesans were not obeyed; the ordinaries were not regarded; the spiritual officers, as suffragans, archdeacons, chancellors, doctors, commissaries, officials, deans, lawyers, scribes, and summoners, were every where despised; the laws and liberties of holy church were trodden under foot; the christian faith was ruinously decayed; God's service was laughed to scorn; the spiritual jurisdiction, authority, honour, power, policy, laws, rites, ceremonies, curses, keys, censures, and canonical sanctions of the church, were had in utter contempt.

So that all, in a manner, was come to nought.

And the cause of this was, that the heretics and Lollards of Wickliff's opinion were suffered to preach abroad, so boldly to gather conventicles unto them, to keep schools in men's houses, to make books, compile treatises, and write ballads; to teach privately in angles and corners, as in woods, fields, meadows, pastures, groves, and in caves of the ground. This would be, they said, a destruction to the commonwealth, a subversion to the land, and an utter decay of the king's estate royal, if remedy were not sought

* The abjuration is printed by Bale and Fox.

in time. And this was their policy to couple the king's authority with that they had done in their former counsel of craft, and so to make it thereby the stronger. For they perceived themselves else very far too weak to follow against their enemies, what they had so largely enterprised. Upon this complaint, the king immediately called a parliament at Leicester. It might not in those days be holden at Westminster, for the great favour that the lord Cobham had both in London and about the city, yet were they deceived. What they doubted most, lighted there soonest upon them.

A bill was put in there by the commons, against their continual wasting of the temporalties, like as it had been twice before by procurement of the said lord Cobham, both in the days of king Richard II., anno 1395, and also of king Henry IV., anno domini 1410, but this was workmanly defeated by another proper practice of theirs.

They put the king in remembrance to claim his right in France, and granted him thereunto a tenth, with other great subsidy of money. Thus were Christ's people betrayed every way, and their lives bought and sold by these most cruel thieves. For in the said parliament the king made this most blasphemous and cruel act, to be as a law for ever: That whatsoever they were, that should read the scriptures in the mother tongue, which was then called Wickliff's learning, they should forfeit land, cattle, body, life, and goods, from their heirs for ever, and so be condemned for heretics to God, enemies to the crown, and most arrant traitors to the land.* Besides this, it was enacted, that no sanctuary, or privileged ground, within the realm, should hold them, though they were still permitted both to thieves and murderers. And if in case they would not give over, or were relapsed after their pardon, they should suffer death in two manners, they should first be hanged for treason against the king, and then burned for heresy against God; though neither of them were committed. .

Anon after, that act was proclaimed throughout the realm, and then had the bishops, the priests, the monks, and the friars a world somewhat to their minds. For then were

* It was nevertheless enacted in this parliament, that a general pardon should for the present be granted to all Lollards, excepting sir John Oldcastle, and some others therein mentioned.—*Bale.*

many taken in divers quarters, and suffered most cruel death. And many fled out of the land into Germany, Bohemia, France, Spain, Portugal, and into Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, working there many marvels against their false kingdom too long to write. In the Christmas following was sir Roger Acton, knight, master John Browne, sir John Beverley, a learned preacher, and divers others imprisoned for quarrelling with certain priests. For all men at that time could not patiently suffer their blasphemous brags.

The complaint was made unto the king of them, that they had made a great assembly in St. Giles'-field at London, purposing the destruction of the land, and the subversion of the commonwealth. As the king was thus informed, he erected a banner, saith Walden, with a cross thereupon, as the pope doth commonly by his legates, when he pretendeth to war against the Turk, and with great number of men entered the same field, where he found no such company. Yet was the complaint judged true, because the bishops had spoken it, at the information of their priests. In the mean season, the lord Cobham escaped out of the Tower of London in the night,* and fled into Wales, where he continued more than four years after.

In January following, was the before-named sir Roger Acton, master John Browne, sir John Beverley, and thirty-six more, of whom the more part were gentlemen of birth, convicted of heresy by the bishops, and condemned of treason by the temporalty, and, according to the act, were first hanged, and then burned in the said St. Giles'-field. In the same year, also, one John Claydon, a skinner, and one Richard Turming, a baker, were both hanged and burned in Smithfield by that act, besides what was done in all other quarters of England; which was no small number, if it were thoroughly known.†

* About 28th October, 1413; and on 10th January following a commission was issued out to the lord mayor of London, for apprehending him, &c. At the same time, he was indicted for treason, and in Hilary term he was outlawed for treason.

† The Romanists objected much to the account of lord Cobham given by Bale and Fox. Harpsfield, under the name of Alan Cope, wrote representing the Lollards as rebels. Fox, in his later editions, replied very fully to these cavils and refuted them. He stated therein, that among the causes which withdrew his mind from the papists' faction, was hardly any greater than because he saw them so regardless of truth, when their own interests were concerned.

The latter imprisoning and death of lord Cobham.

In the year of our Lord 1413, died Thomas Arundel, who had been archbishop of Canterbury during many years, to the great destruction of christian belief.* Yet his prodigious tyranny died not with him, but succeeded with his office in Henry Chicheley, and in a great sort more of the spiteful spiritualty. For their malice was not yet settled against the good lord Cobham. But they confederated with the lord Powys, who was at that time a great governor in Wales, feeding him with lordly gifts and promises to accomplish their desire. He, at the last, thus monied like Judas, and outwardly pretending him great amity and favour, most cowardly and wretchedly took him, and in conclusion so sent him up to London, where he remained a month or two imprisoned again in the Tower. And, after long process, they condemned him again of heresy and treason, by the before-named act; he rendering thanks unto God that he had so appointed him to suffer for his name's sake.

And, upon the day appointed, he was brought out of the Tower, with his arms bound behind him, having a very cheerful countenance. Then was he laid upon a hurdle, as though he had been a most heinous traitor to the crown, and so drawn forth into St. Giles'-field, where they had set up a new pair of gallows. As he was come to the place of execution, and was taken from the hurdle, he fell down devoutly upon his knees, desiring Almighty God to forgive his enemies. Then stood he up, and beheld the multitude, exhorting them, in most godly manner, to follow the laws of God, written in the scriptures, and in any wise to beware of such teachers as they see contrary to Christ in their conversation and living, with many other special counsels. Then was he hanged up there by the middle in chains of iron, and so consumed alive in the fire, praising the name of God so long as his life lasted. In the end, he commended his soul into the hands of God, and so departed hence most christianly, his body being resolved into ashes.

And this was done in the year of our Lord 1418, which was the sixth year of king Henry V., the people there present showing great dolour. How the priests that time fared, blasphemed, and cursed, requiring the people not to pray

* It was reported that he was attacked by his last illness when pronouncing sentence upon lord Cobham.

for him, but to judge him damned in hell, for that he departed not in the obedience of their pope, it were too long to write. This terrible kind of death, with gallows, chains, and fire, appears not very precious in the eyes of men that are carnal, no more than did the death of Christ, when he was hanged up among thieves. "The righteous seemeth to die," saith the wise man, "in the sight of them which are unwise, and their end is taken for very destruction. Ungodly fools think their lives very madness, and their passage hence without all honour. But though they suffer pain before men," saith he, "yet is their expectation full of immortality. They are accounted for the children of God, and have their just portion among the saints. As gold in the furnace doth God try his elect, and as a most pleasant burnt-offering receiveth he them to rest."

The more hard the passage is, the more glorious shall they appear in the latter resurrection. Not that the afflictions of this life are worthy of such a glory, but that it is God's heavenly pleasure so to reward them. Never are the judgments and ways of men like unto the judgments and ways of God, but contrary evermore, unless they be taught of him. "In the latter time," saith the Lord unto Daniel, "shall many be chosen, proved, and purified by fire; yet shall the ungodly live wickedly still, and have no understanding, that is, of faith." By an angel from heaven was John earnestly commanded to write, that Blessed are the dead, which hence depart in the Lord. Right dear, saith David, in the sight of God is the death of his true servants. Thus resteth this valiant christian knight, sir John Oldcastle, under the altar of God, which is Jesus Christ, among that godly company, which in the kingdom of patience suffered great tribulation, with the death of their bodies, for his faithful word and testimony; abiding there with them the fulfilling of their whole number, and the full restoration of his elect. The which He grant in effect, at his time appointed, who is one God eternal. Amen.

THE WORSHIP OF SAINTS AND IMAGES, AND PILGRIMAGE.

During the examinations of Thorpe and lord Cobham, considerable discussion arose respecting the worship of images, the adoration of the cross and pilgrimages. As the reader will have seen, these idolatrous practices were boldly defended, and although much ingenious sophistry

has been resorted to by modern Romanists, their church still maintains these abominations, asserting that image worship has been customary from the times of the apostles; thus it is constituted a point for historical inquiry. The texts from holy writ and the apocryphal books, with the passages from the fathers adduced by the church of Rome, have been fully examined by protestant writers, who have shown that there is no historical evidence in support of image worship earlier than the time of Constantine, when many corruptions had crept into the church.

The practice of the church of Rome is as decidedly idolatrous now, as in the fifteenth century. In books of devotion printed by authority for the use of English papists, we find the same prayers to saints, and "Hail Mary, lady and mistress of the world, to whom *all power* has been given, both in heaven and earth." The Breviary still contains direct prayers to the cross, one will suffice, "Hail, O cross, our only hope in this season of the passion, increase righteousness to the pious, and grant pardon to the guilty." (Brev. Rom. temp. Qudrages.) The worship of Mary and other saints must not be considered as a trifling error, Luther has stated the fatal consequences in forcible terms, that, like many others, he was induced to look upon Christ as an angry judge, while he regarded Mary as the throne of grace. See History of the Church of Christ, vol. vi. ch. iii.

The principle upon which pilgrimages are founded, is shown by Lewis (life of Pecock) in a quotation from Peter de Mediano, who states that to the virgin a privilege is granted of being present, physically and really, in certain of her images—that in them she might receive adoration from faithful worshippers. Upon this principle, one block of wood or stone is deemed preferable to another; one chapel is crowded with riches, and its priests enjoy every luxury, while another shrine remains in obscurity, the image in rags, waited upon by poverty-stricken attendants, until some deep laid fraud or unexpected occurrence, raises it to fame and wealth. Hence the eagerness of Romish priests even now, in a part of the British isles, to advocate pilgrimages.

The shrine of the virgin, at Walsingham in Norfolk, is often referred to in the preceding examinations; the licentious practices common among its votaries, are recorded by writers of those times. Erasmus in the following century, describes it minutely with all its paraphernalia of relics and mysteries, the nodding image, the virgin's milk, &c.; he copies the prayers then offered up to the senseless block! Erasmus also mentions the abundance of pieces of the cross; he says, that enough to load a ship might be collected, "yet our Lord bore the whole cross when entire!" Lewis has also described the manner in which the adoration of the cross was then practised, "men coming to it in lowest wise," creeping on their knees, and kissing it in the devoutest manner. One of the most celebrated till the time of the Reformation, was the rood of Northern, a crucifix at the north door of St. Paul's cathedral; to this offerings were abundantly made, men swore by it, and made pilgrimages to it. But the pilgrimages to the shrine of Thomas à Becket were the most frequented, and the offerings made there the most considerable. The annual amount in one year, was a sum equal to ten thousand pounds at the present day, while not a penny was offered at a shrine in the same cathedral dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ, and only an inconsiderable sum to that of the virgin. In another year the offerings to this rebellious prelate were equal to twenty thousand pounds of our money!

THE

LANTERN OF LIGHT,

Written about the year 1400,

NOW PUBLISHED FROM EARLY MANUSCRIPTS.

Take ye of our gracious God this little treatise that here is offered, which is called a Lantern of Light, for ye shall see these things thereby :—

CHAP. I. Of a Prologue.
II. Of a Petition.
III. What is Antichrist in general.
IV. What is Antichrist in special with his three parties.
V. What is Antichrist in special, with five conditions.
VI. What is the Church belonging to God, with her names, likenesses, and conditions.
VII. What the material Church, with her ornaments.
VIII. Of good and evil coming to the material Church.
IX. Of discretion to know the good from the evil.
X. How the good of the second Church accords with the good of the first.
XI. Of joy in tribulation.
XII. Of the Fiend's deceits, by which he pursueth in his members, the keepers of God's commands.
XIII. What is the Fiend's church, with her properties.

The Lantern of Light was printed by Robert Redman, but without date—he printed from A. D. 1523 to A. D. 1540. The type shows it to have been among the early books of the Reformation. It is now one of the scarcest of that period. A copy was obtained for the present collection, but as the printed work contains some additions probably made when preparing for the press, it was thought desirable to follow the original manuscripts which contain the work in the form circulated among the Lollards, excepting in the correction of a few errors.

An interesting notice of THE LANTERN OF LIGHT is found in the history of John Claydon, skinner of London, who was accused before archbishop Chichely, A. D. 1415, "for the suspicion of heresy." It is given by Fox from the archbishop's own registers. Claydon, when accused, openly confessed, that for the preceding twenty years he had been suspected for Lollardy and heresy, and had been imprisoned five years by the late bishop of London. He had twice abjured all doctrines contrary to the catholic faith, and the determination of the church.

Being asked whether he ever had in his house, since his abjuration, any books written in English, he confessed that he had many which were now in possession of the mayor of London. The mayor said, that he had them, and that they were the worst and most perverse he ever saw or read. He produced one of them which was well bound in red leather, written in a good English hand on parchment, entitled, THE LANTERN OF LIGHT. Claydon confessed that he knew it very well, because he caused it to be written at his own costs and charges, for he spent much money thereupon since his abjuration. Being asked who wrote it, he answered, one John Grime. Farther, being required what John Grime was, he answered, he could not tell. Being questioned whether he ever read it, he replied that he could not read, but had heard the fourth part read by one John Fuller. Being asked whether he thought the contents to be catholic, profitable, good, and true, he answered, that many things which he had heard in the same book were both profitable, good, and healthful to his soul, and he had great affection for the same book, for a sermon preached at Horsleydown, written therein.

The books were then delivered to Dr. Lindewood and other examiners; fifteen articles or points, which were noted for heresies and errors, were taken out of the Lantern of Light, which are printed by Fox. The books were condemned and burned; and Claydon himself being condemned for having relapsed into heresy, was burned in Smithfield with one Turming, a baker.

From the above particulars it is evident that THE LANTERN OF LIGHT was written soon after Wickliff's decease; the contents of the work show that it was not compiled till after the burning of the Lollards had commenced. The name of the author is not known, as it does not clearly appear whether John Grime was the author, or only the copyist. Tanner mentions a John Gryme as author of a work on the mass, but gives no farther notice of any one of that name connected with those times. Herbert mentions that his printed copy had a manuscript note, ascribing it to a William Hardy, curate of Barling in Essex. It is equal, if not superior, to most of the writings of that day, even to those of Wickliff.

THE

LANTERN OF LIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

The Prologue.

God, that is good in himself, fair in his angels, marvellous in his saints, and merciful upon sinners, have mercy on us, now and ever, and give us grace to hold the way of truth in these days of great tribulation. For now, many that seemed to have been stable in virtue, fall from their holy purpose, dreading loss of goods and bodily pain. As Christ said, Matt. xxiv. The great plenty and abundance of wickedness shall make cold the charity of many. For now the fiend hath marred the world by his lieutenant antichrist, that men be borne about in divers doubts, as waves of the sea, wretchedly divided in opinions, each neighbour with others. But St. Paul saith, there is but one Lord, whom all men should dread and love; one faith, that all men should believe without changing; one baptism or christendom, that all men should keep without defouling. Alas! how is this unity broken, that men unruled, walk after their lusts, as beasts in the corn! Certes the wicked man that Christ speaketh of, Matt. xiii. hath done this deed. The enemy of God hath sown tares among the seed of Jesus Christ. This wicked man is antichrist, who clouteth his laws, as rotten rags, to the clean cloth of Christ's gospel; and waketh in malice as a child of Judas, while Simon sleepeth and taketh no heed. O thou wicked man, is there any other that may save souls than Jesus Christ? Holy and true Jesus Christ hath the key of David, which openeth and no other closeth, closeth and then no other openeth, (Rev. iii.) who casteth down, and then no man reareth, who seateth and then no man casteth down. And, therefore, in the virtue of this name Jesus, standeth all man's salvation, as it is written, Acts iv. St. Peter saith, There is none other name under heaven given to men, but this name Jesus. In which it behoves us

to be made safe; for only in virtue of this name, cometh remission of sins. As it is written, Luke xxiv. It behoveth to be preached among all folks, penance,* and remission of sins in the name of Jesus. Art not thou a wicked man, a foulted† shepherd, a cruel beast, the son of perdition, and antichrist himself, who pretendest in thee and in thy members, to bind and loose, to bless and curse beside this name Jesus? People without number, following thee and thy divided laws, are divided from Christ Jesus, and go with the blindlings to hell for evermore. And this is greatly to sorrow, so that Christ maketh mourning thereupon, and saith, John v. I have come in the name of my Father, and ye have not taken me, when another comes in his own name, him ye shall take. And this is antichrist, as St. John Chrysostom saith upon this gospel, "He that will not receive Christ in pain of sin, he is constrained to receive antichrist."

Therefore, in this time of hideous darkness, some seek the LANTERN OF LIGHT, of which spake the prophet, Psal. cxix. Lord, thy word is a lantern to my feet. For as far as the light of this Lantern shineth, so far darkness of sin, and clouds of the fiend's temptations vanish away, and may not abide. And always, when the Lantern giveth light into the heart, it cleanseth from corruption, and suageth and healeth spiritual sores. As the wise man saith, (in the Book of Wisdom,) "Neither herb nor plaster hath healed them, but, Lord, thy mighty word that healeth all things." For, Lord, when thou diedst upon the cross, thou puttest in thy word the Spirit of life, and gavest to it power of quickening by thy own precious blood, as thou thyself sayest, The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and life.

CHAPTER II.

Of a Petition.

DEAR friends, help me with your prayer with almighty God, for St. James saith, The busy prayer of the righteous is much worth. This your asking and your desire is a charge unto me, but with God nothing is impossible, as Christ saith, Matt. xix. Mark x. Luke xviii. And in this

* Repentance. † Foolish.

faith Isaiah saith, (xxvi.) The Lord God himself worketh all our works in us. Fail we not then God in good living, and he may not fail to give us such wisdom as is needful to us, and also to constrain our tongue, and to give us true organ of ready eloquence, to edifying of our neighbour, as Christ saith, Matt. x. Forsooth it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. For the apostles of Christ and his other followers were not graduate men in schools, but the Holy Ghost suddenly inspired them, and made them plenteous of heavenly lore. And they that have laboured in mortal learning, humbled themselves as simple men, as St. Jerome saith, "Preachers unlettered are sent to preach, that the faith of true believers should be hoped to be brought in, not by man's virtue, but by speech and doctrine of God." And so saith St. Augustine, writing to Simplician, "Untaught men rise and catch heaven, and we, with our clergy, are drowned to hell." And St. Gregory saith, "Right as truth incarnate, that is, Christ in his manhood, chose poor simple men for his preaching, so antichrist is to choose sturdy and double-minded men, having the wisdom of this world, to preach his falsehood." Have we then full faith in this Lord Jesus, with perfect living, and this Lord, through your prayer, shall lead this work after his own pleasure, and bring it to a perfect end, to his own worship, and the profit of his servants.

CHAPTER III.

What is Antichrist in general; with six conditions.

To speak in general, antichrist is every man that liveth against Christ; as St. John saith, Forsooth now there are many antichrists. And therefore saith St. Augustine, "Whoso liveth contrary to Christ, he is an antichrist." Be thou within, be thou without, if thou live contrary to Christ, thou art but chaff. Of which Christ saith, Matt. iii. The chaff shall burn with fire that may not be quenched. And the soul that is chaff, shall ever suffer, and never die, as the prophet saith, Isaiah ix. Six sins there are against the Holy Ghost, that turn the wretched soul into this chaff. The philosopher saith, "There is no evil fled unless it be known." Therefore we shall name them in this little treatise for the more learning of small understanders.

The first of these sins is presumption—that is high swelling of the spirit, without dread of God's righteousness. And of this sin all manner of malice and wickedness taketh root, that reigneth among mankind, in ignorant or learned. In whomsoever this sin of presumption hath no lordship, in him the devil is overcome.

The second sin is desperation or despair—that is, too little trust on the mercy of God. St. Augustine saith, "Dread of God's righteousness, and hope of God's mercy, are two gates of life." For by them we enter, here into grace, and after into bliss, as the prophet saith, Ps. cxlvii. It is well pleasing unto the Lord upon them that dread him, and in them that trust on his mercy. And again, presumption and desperation are two gates of death, by which men enter into sin and trouble, and afterwards into the pains of hell without end. St. John teacheth against this sin, and saith, My little sons, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not in the sin of despair; but if it be so that any of us have sinned, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, our just Lord; and he is the mercy-asker for our sins; not only for our sins, but also for the sins of all the world. Jesus is, as to say "a Saviour," in our tongue. For he hath plenty of medicine to save all mankind, if they would take this medicine and be safe. For Gregory saith, "He slayeth himself that will not keep the bidding of his leech." (physician.)

The third sin is, obstinacy or hardness of heart, which will not be contrite for compunction, nor made soft with pity, nor moved with prayers or preachings, and setteth nought by beatings. It is unkind against good deeds, unfaithful to counsels, fierce and raging against judgments, unshame-faced in foul things, neither fearful in perils, nor manful in manhood, foolhardy against God, forgetful of time that is past, negligent in time that is present, not providing for time that is to come. And, to speak shortly, this is that sin which neither dreadeth God nor shameth man. Thus saith St. Bernard. And a medicine for this hard heart, Lincoln (Grosthead) teaches, when he says, "A hard heart should be brayed in a mortar of stone with a heavy pestle." This mortar is the body of Christ, wounded in his passion. This pestle is the dread of damnation that follows this sin. Thus then, thou obstinate man, thou man indurate in sin, thou hard-hearted wretch! Come thou nigh to the body of Christ. For dread of damnation conform thee to Christ's passion.

The fourth sin is, finally unrepentant. That is he that will never do true penance, [or be sorrowful for his sins,] but leadeth his life continually after the desires of his flesh, overcome with the fiend, and the false world. For no man doeth true penance to God, but he that fully leaveth that sin for which he suffereth penance. Thus saith St. Augustine, "They make a feigned shrift to a priest, and take part of sacraments; they build churches, and find priests to read and sing. They relieve the poor needy, and mend places that are perilous, but still they are hard congealed as frost, in old custom of sin." Upon this saith Gregory, "He that giveth meat or clothing to the poor needy, and is defouled in wickedness of body and soul, that which is most, he giveth to sin, that which is least, he giveth to righteousness." His goods he giveth to God, himself to the devil. For he setteth more price by worldly riches, than he doth by the body or the soul, and loveth most that which God loveth least; wherefore his love is turned to hate.

God hath given to man five precious gifts. The least of all is worldly goods; better than these is man's body which God hath endowed with natural strength, and granted in reason to use this world, himself to chastise, clothe, and feed. Above these two is man's soul, which beareth God's image and his likeness. Lord! what profit were it to win this world, and put loss to this soul? and the body is a hateful carrion when the soul is gone therefrom. But God's grace passeth these three. For where this faileth, no wisdom availeth. Look these are not spent amiss, nor work beside their order; but that they stretch all to one end, to win the fifth, that is, the bliss of heaven, for ever. Thou that changest this order upside down, St. Paul asketh this question of thee; Whether despisest thou the riches of the goodness and patience, and long abiding of thy God? Knowest thou not that the goodness of God leadeth or ordaineth thee to penance? (repentance.) Yet after thine hardness, and unrepentant heart, thou treasurest to thee wrath in the day of wrath, and showing of righteous judgment of God, that shall yield to each man after his works, Rom. ii.

The fifth sin is, envy of thy brother's grace, [as when thy neighbour is wise, well governed, praised, or borne up, rich, wealthy, strong, fair or virtuous in abundance of grace, then this envious man slanders, upbraids, reproves, despises, hates, hinders, scorns, and pursues to defoul his brother's grace as much as he may,] as the wise man saith, A man

walking in the highway, and dreading God, is despised of him that walketh in the wrong way.

When Jesus Christ cast out a devil from a man that was dumb, then scribes and pharisees, envious sects, that were a false private religion, slandered, that Christ wrought this miracle in Beelzebub that was prince of devils. Since these sects durst say thus to Christ, the head of man's soul, how much worse should they dare to his followers? Thus prelates and friars in these days shamefully slander their simple brethren, that travail through Christ's holy law to cast evil manners from their souls, preaching the gospel according to Christ's intent, to turn the people to virtuous living. They have brought their malice about to slander for LOLLARDS, those that speak of God, and they drive the people from the faith, that they dare not work or speak for slander. But assuredly they are not worthy Christ, that stay for the barking of these hounds. For none is worthy to be with this Lord who is ashamed to be in his service, in weal or in wo. And such men show themselves traitors to God, who with their slanders hinder their brethren, and say, the fiend may and will make wise his members that serve him in sin, but so will not Christ his loved servants, who live in cleanness, to serve him in virtue. This dispute stretches unto the Godhead, to be punished in the day of judgment. That a priest should not be hindered to preach the truth, nor God's people to speak of their belief, is openly taught in the book of Numbers xi. There it is read that Eldad and Medad prophesied, although they were not licensed by Moses. Joshua grudged against these men, and made his plaint unto Moses; and Moses said, Why art thou envious for me? Who may forbid that all the people prophesy? and God grant his Spirit unto them. This is confirmed in the gospel. St. John said unto Christ, We have seen a man casting out devils in thy name, who followeth not us, and we have forbidden him. Jesus said, Forbid him not. Alas! how dare our bishops for shame offend against these God's laws. Here the enemies of truth object, and bring Paul, where he saith, Rom. x. How shall they preach unless they are sent? With this they blind many folk, cutting the meaning from the words. For Paul meaneth that priests should preach, for they are sent both of God and of the bishop, to do that office. How shall these bishops maintain their constitutions against their God, and holy sects? It shall be more sufferable to Sodom and

Gomorrah, than to this people that disturb God's ordinance.

The sixth sin is, fighting against the truth which a man knoweth. That is, when the truth is told to the guilty who disposes himself not to be amended, then he makes blind ungrounded reasonings, with subtle arguments and foul sophistications, and damneth the truth against his conscience, with a bold forehead that cannot shame, as the prophet saith, Jeremiah iii. As Jannes and Jambres againstood Moses in the sight of Pharaoh, so these againstand the truth, men corrupted in their minds. St. Peter calleth these men by name, when he saith, These are master-liars that shall bring in among the people sects of perdition. Though ye rise with Lucifer, and make yourselves nests among the stars, from thence ye shall be drawn and thrown to the ground. When will ye mark the words of Christ, who curseth you for your apostacy, and for that ye pull children from their fathers?* Christ saith unto you, Matt. xxiii. Wo to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, that compass about the sea and the land, to make you a novice ;† and when ye have found him, ye make him a hell-brand double than yourselves. As the foolishness of Pharaoh's philosophers was made known, so the false impugning of the truth by these subtle hypocrites shall speedily be made open. All men take heed of these six sins.

CHAPTER IV.

What is Antichrist, in special, with his three parties.

Of the great chief antichrist, that in a special manner bringeth forth false laws against Jesus Christ, and pretendeth himself to be most holy, the Lord God thus teacheth by the prophet Isaiah ix. (ver. 15.) A man of great age, and worshipful, holden of the world, he is head and chief antichrist. A prophet or a preacher teaching leasing, he is the tail of this antichrist. Of this tail speaketh St. Peter more plainly, and saith, These are spiritual merchants that shall chaffer with the people in feigned words, and with their sugar-likerous speech, they beguile the hearts of

* This is an allusion to the arts of the friars, who induced children to forsake their parents and family duties, and even laudable studies, to become members of their orders. See the life of Wickliff, p. 12.

† One just entered into monastic orders.

innocents.* For Jude saith, They shall worship the persons of men because of winning. This tail of antichrist shall not preach freely.

[Various passages are then quoted, Rev. xiii. 16, 17. xiv. 9—11. Zech. xi. 15. 17. Rom. viii. 9. Rev. xvi. 10, 11. with an application of them to the Romish prelates of that day. Then follows,] Lincoln† saith, "I quake, I dread, I am in horror, I am afraid, but I dare not be still, lest peradventure that sentence fall on me which the prophet saith, Isaiah vi. Wo to me, for I have stilled. The well, the beginning, and the cause of all ruin and mischief, is THE COURT OF ROME." Now, by the one authority of God, and one accordance of his holy saints, follows an open conclusion firmly grounded in true belief, that in the court of Rome is the head of antichrist, and in prelates is the body of antichrist, but in these clouted sects, as monks, canons, and friars, is the venomous tail of antichrist.

How this antichrist shall be destroyed, God himself teacheth by the prophet Daniel, and saith, This antichrist shall be destroyed without hands, that is, without power of man. For Paul saith, 2 Thess. ii. Christ shall slay antichrist with the spirit of his mouth, that is, with the holy word of his law. And the Lord shall destroy him with the shining of his coming, that is, with turning of men's hearts by his grace, to his law, a little before the doom.

CHAPTER V.

What is Antichrist in special, with five conditions.

HOLY David the king, had given to him the full spirit of prophecy; and he, seeing the coming of antichrist, his living, and his fall, marked five hideous assaults which he shall commit against the servants of God. The first assault of antichrist, is constitution, as the prophet saith, Lord, suffer thou to ordain a law maker upon thy people, in pain of their sin, for they will not consent to the truth. That is to mean, antichrist uses false, lucrative, or winning laws, as absolutions, indulgences, pardons, privileges, and all other

* Simple people.

† Grosthead. He resisted the pope's profligate demand that he should allow an Italian boy to hold a benefice in his diocese. For this he was cited to Rome; the near view he had of the papal court fully convinced him it was antichrist. See History of the Church of Christ, vol. iv.

heavenly treasure that is brought to sale, to spoil the people of their worldly goods; and principally these new constitutions, by whose strength antichrist interdicts churches, examines preachers, and deprives them of their benefices; curses hearers, and takes away the goods of them that further the preaching of a priest, yea, though it were an angel of heaven, unless that priest show the mark of the beast, which is turned into a new name, and called a special letter of license, for the more blinding of ignorant people.*

The second assault of antichrist, is tribulation, as the prophet saith, antichrist vexes the people by might, and hunting them to doing of idolatry. God saith by the prophet, Isaiah v. Wo to you that say good is evil, and evil is good, putting light into darkness, and darkness into light, turning sweet into bitter, and bitter into sweet. And thus doth antichrist, when he transposes virtues into vices, and vices into virtues; as pilgrimage into outrage, and outrage into pilgrimage.†

The third assault of antichrist is, inquisition, as the prophet saith, antichrist inquires, searches, hearkens where he may find any man or woman that writes, reads, learns, or studies God's law, in their mother tongue, to lead their life after the pleasing will of God, and soon he catches them in his censures, and afterwards smites, as he may most grievously hurt them. But he shall not make this inquisition after the greatness of his wrath, for God shall refrain, and abridge the power of his malice, so that he shall do no more than God shall suffer him.

The fourth assault of antichrist is, persecution. Antichrist sitteth and sotteth in the peace of this world, with rich men in their dens. But the poor, meek, simple, and lowly, them he espies and pursues, and destroys them both bodily and spiritually. Ever in a country that is fat and abounding with worldly goods, there antichrist with his clerks build their nests, and if thou look about thee thou shalt find them among woods and waters.‡ [The writer then applies Rev. xvi. 13. as betokening the monastic orders.] They purchase

* Allusion probably is here made to archbishop Arundel's constitutions, enacted A. D. 1408.

† The crusades undertaken at the instigation of the popes; particularly those against the Albigenses in the twelfth century, when the pope's troops were called pilgrims.

‡ The sites of the principal ancient abbeys and monasteries, in the parts of the country then most fertile, sufficiently prove the truth of this statement.

of lords that are above them much part of their goods, with the tongue of flattering and feigned hypocrisies; and of the commons about them, they beguile into their hands much part of their goods. What they have won they hold fast against the authority of God's laws; and with these riches they nourish wild, sturdy, and lawless men, who pursue those that say ought against this cursed sin. But God, in this persecution, comforts his servants, and saith, Psalm xlvi. Our God is help in tribulations. True men shall not be abashed, though proud fleshly men are confedered to antichrist, and help him and his persecutions.

The fifth assault of antichrist is, execution. When he seeth that he avails not in these torments, then he executes his malice against Christ's chosen. In this time of execution, the vicious part of the laity, from the highest to the lowest, shall consent to execute the wickedness of this vicious part of the clergy. Then shall this prophecy be fulfilled, Ps. lxxix. They shall shed out innocent blood, and no man shall dâre to bury their bodies. But, as St. Augustine declares, "When antichrist deems that he has lordship over all the servants of God, roaring upon them, with divers devices of tormenting, then shall he fall to open reproof for evermore." [Various references to the period of three years and a half, the time of the slaying of the witnesses, Rev. xi. then follow.] Let no man look after Enoch and Elijah in person, for then he may be beguiled, but in spirit and in power, now they are come to make men's hearts ready before Christ's doom, to whom be glory, now and for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

What is the Church only belonging to God, with her names, likenesses, and conditions.

To speak of holy church, first we take ground of the gospel, where Christ saith, Matt. xvi. The gates of hell shall not have might against holy church. For the more clear declaring of this matter, and avoiding of objections that may be put forth, understand that there are three churches, of which God's law often makes mention, and much they differ from each other, to them that take good heed.

The first is called a little flock, as Christ saith in Luke xii. Dread ye nothing, my little flock, it pleaseth your

Father to give you a kingdom: and this church is called the chosen number of them that shall be saved. Also Paul saith, Eph. v. Christ hath chosen him a glorious church, neither having spot, nor blain, nor any other such thing, but that this church may be holy and undefiled. This church is called Christ's spouse. She is likened to a woman clad in the sun, as St. John saith in the Apocalypse. This church is likened to Peter's little boat, which was in the midst of the sea, Matt. xiv. Mark vi. The little boat was cast about in the midst of the sea with the waves. This boat both sank and swam, but never might it drown. So holy church suffers many perils, and sometimes bodily death, by the pursuit of enemies, but it shall never be damned.

This church is likened to paradise. The trees that bear fruit are good holy livers here on earth. The fruits of those trees are the works of holy saints. The tree of life is our Lord Jesus Christ. The tree of knowing good and evil, is the free choice of man's will. But however we speak in diverse names or likenesses of this holy church, they teach nought else but this one name, that is to say, the congregation or gathering together faithful souls that lastingly keep faith and truth, in word and in deed, to God and to man, and raise their life and sure hope of mercy, and grace, and bliss, at their end, and cover over this building in perfect charity that shall not fail in weal or in woe. Of this Paul spake to the Corinthians, and in them to all others, saying, The temple of God is holy, and that are ye. And by this we understand that the soul of a righteous man is the seat of God. Well ought such a man to be watchful and wise, that hath the great Lord God of Israel dwelling in his soul; and so saith St. Augustine, "O thou christian soul, awake, and if there be in thee any power of charity, that sustaineth all things, follow thou the steps of thy Lord. Take heed how many thousands of martyrs have made a smooth, plain way, to thee. There have passed before thee children and young damsels, and yet thou dreadest! Arise thou soul, for He shall lead thee who is the Way, Truth, and Life; the Way not erring; the Truth not beguiling; and the Life not failing! Way in example, Truth in promission, and Life in meed."

Thus wandereth holy church in earth, in prayers, fastings, and wakings; in abstinence, tribulations, and anguish; in persecutions, in much need, and in prisons; in bonds,

in cold, and in much heaviness; in thirst, in hunger, and in blamings; in reprovings, in slanders, and in patience; in long abiding, in simpleness, and in weeping; in forgiving, in soberness, and in chastity; in speediness, in largeness, and in charity. These are groanings of man's soul that longeth in love after Christ her spouse, till she have brought herself, a child of God, to bliss without end. And then for greatness of God's reward, the more she suffered, the more is her joy. For so saith St. Paul, Rom. viii. The sufferings of this time that we suffer in this mortal life, are as no sufferings in comparison to the glory that is to come, that shall be showed in us.

For then we shall be endowed with four dowers in our body, of which St. Paul speaketh, 1 Cor. xv. The body that is sown in corruption shall rise without corruption, in this chosen church at the day of doom, and this is called immortality. The body that is sown unworthy, shall rise in glory, and this is called clerte.* The body that is sown in infirmity, shall rise in power, and this is called agility. The body that is sown earthly, shall rise spiritual, and this is called subtilty.†

But there are four other substantial rewards with which we shall be endowed in our souls. In plain speech, the first is knowledge without error; the second, mind without forgetting; the third, will without gainsaying; the fourth, fruition or enjoyment of the Godhead, and love of God everlasting. Oh a wonderful joy is this, when the soul shall be fed with the sight of the Godhead, clad in the light of the Godhead, and ever occupied in the worship of the Godhead! Paul, 1 Cor. ii. saith, Bodily eye hath never seen, neither ear hath heard, neither hath entered into man's heart, those things that God hath ordained to them that love him. Who should not move his feeble understanding to think on the choir that praiseth in heaven the goodness of this unsearchable Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

[Then follows a description of the glories of heaven; also an allegorical exposition of Rev. xii. 1. respecting the woman that appeared in heaven, clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; it contains some striking references to the work of Christ, and his union with his church.]

Other lights borrow their shining from the sun, both moon

* Clearness, brightness, glory. † Or spirituality.

and stars in their due course, else they are obscured with darkness that may not comfort night or day. So all men's work, in word or deed, borrow their light at Christ Jesus; for he is the Sun of righteousness. David declares, Ps. cxii. what this light meaneth, Light is sprung up to the righteous, that wandereth in the darkness of this life; and this is our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his own mercy hath showed it to his people.

Whatever any man doeth that has not this light, it leads blindlings to the dungeon of hell. But when this Sun shineth in his works, he grows by heat of God's grace, and ripens in virtue, as does the corn, to be reaped in his time to God's barn. Oh with how much diligence should this Lord be served for this gift of great price! Moses said, Deut. iv. There is no nation under heaven that hath their God so nigh to them, as our God is to us. For Christ saith, Matt. xxviii. Lo, I am with you all the days of your life, unto the end of the world.

Worthily is holy church likened to a woman, for she hath both sons and daughters; but not without the help and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the gospel witnesses, John xv. Without me, saith Christ, ye may do nothing—that is to say, nothing thankworthy. Here some object, that the gospel is not of authority, but inasmuch as the church hath authorized it. For they say that no man knoweth such words to be the gospel, but as the church hath determined. This conclusion seems to savour of heresy, by the witness of St. Augustine, who says, "Heresy is a false teaching, contrary to holy writ, fool-hardily defended; most because of worship and worldly winning." And since all these are found in this objection, it is full suspect of heresy.—St. James destroyeth this objection, and saith, God hath of his own free will begotten us through the word of truth, that we may be some beginning of his creature. And this creature is holy church, that was chosen in the time of grace, by the water of cleansing, by Christ's blood of again-buying,* and by power of the Holy Ghost hallowing. Were it not then against reason, and open heresy, to maintain that the word of God, which hath gotten this creature, holy church, should not be of authority, without the authority of this creature, holy church? Wherefore, this conclusion being approved, we grant of belief that the church is inferior to Christ and his gospel, in four

* Redemption.

manners. 1. As the moon to the sun, of which it is enlightened. The church is fair as the moon, Cant. vi. 2. As the earth to the firmament, of which it is watered or made fruitful. As dew cometh down from the firmament, and turneth not thither again, but watereth the earth, and maketh it plenteous of fruits, so the word of God nourisheth holy church, and maketh it to bring forth good virtues. 3. As the flesh to the Spirit, of whom it is quickened. It is the Spirit that quickeneth, and giveth life, John vi. 4. As the body is to the head, of whom it is governed, God the Father, hath made his Son, Christ, head of the church, Eph. v. Christ is head of the body of the church, and every chosen man and woman is called a son or daughter of this church, but all together are the full body of this church, as Paul saith, Rom. xii. We may be one body in Christ, as each of us are other's members. But some children of this woman are simple labourers, and for that they impart of their true travail, therefore they represent the good love of the Holy Ghost. And these dread the Lord, and walk in the way of his commandments, as the prophet saith, Ps. cxxviii. Blessed are all labourers that dread the Lord, and walk in his ways. For thou shalt live by the labour of thine hands. Thou art blessed, and well shall be to thee. And this is the lowest estate, which we call the commons.

Some of this woman's children take the material sword, and are made ministers of Christ's Godhead, having power and dread unto wrath and vengeance of them that do evil, and praising of them that do well. And so by the authority of St. John Baptist, Luke iii. of St. Peter, 1 Pet. ii. and of St. Paul, Rom. xiii. it pertains to the order of knighthood to defend God's law, to maintain good livers, and sorely to punish misdoers. And this is called the second estate in holy church.

But some children of this woman ascend into the highest order of priesthood, and are made ministers of Christ's manhood; and these have knowledge and wisdom to open to the people the way of truth. St. Augustine saith, "Knighthood represents the might and the power of the Father, as the vicar of the Godhead;* and priesthood represents the wisdom of the Son, as the vicar of Christ's manhood." These knights teach to us the dread of God's righteousness, that punisheth obstinate sinners who turn from his law in the evil of their hearts; and priests by their office teach us

* Rom. xiii. 4.

the love that God hath to his people, who forgiveth them all their sins when they come to him and do true penance; then help priests with sacraments to please God and win his love. For Paul admonishes the priest Timothy, and in him all other priests, to take good heed to five things in which their office standeth. 1. Awake thou priest in busy prayer, praying for the people devoutly. 2. Travail thou priest in the lessons of holy writ, studying God's law only. 3. Do thou the work of the gospel, preaching God's word truly. 4. Fulfil thou thy ministry, ministering the sacraments freely. 5. Be thou sober in word and deed, doing and suffering lastingly.

Upon these three estates standeth the church of God; and by the virtue of Christ's incarnation it groweth in meed* to come to bliss. Odo saith, that Christ Jesus took flesh and blood, and was born both God and man, to unite our nature to his Godhead. For when he took our manhood he granted us his Godhead, and in that time, in special manner, he first gave earnest to his church. After this was Jesus Christ baptized in the river Jordan; and thrice tempted of the fiend, to teach us meekly to suffer temptation. And he took death upon a cross, by the cruel judgment of the Jews, and then the church was troth plighted to Christ, and called by name his fair, holy spouse. And as she had grace, by devotion of faith, so hath she worthiness of this name. But when this church is brought to heaven, and resteth in bliss with Christ, then is this marriage fully solemnized. While this life endures in earth, the church is called militant, and when it sleeps in purgatory, she is called slepand.† But when she hath rest of all her travail, then is she called the church triumphant.

CHAPTER VII.

What is the material church, with her ornaments.

The second church is the coming together of good and evil, in a place that is hallowed, far from worldly occupation. There sacraments should be ministered, and God's law both read and preached. In this place our gracious Lord heareth our prayers in special manner, and boweth his ear to his

* Merit.

†, Sleeping. Respecting this error, see Wickliff, p. 40. 59.

ervants, as he granted to Solomon, 1 Kings ix. 2 Chron. vii. Mine eyes, saith God, shall be open, and mine ears shall be lift up to the prayer of him that hath justly prayed in this place. And this is called a material place, for it is made by man's craft, of lime, of timber, and of stone, &c.

For man's profit this place is made, but not so man for the place, as Christ marketh in his gospel, for man should not be beguiled, Matt. xii. Mark ii. Luke vi. The sabbath is made for man, and not man for the sabbath. Man, by virtue of God's word, halloweth this place, but this place may not hallow man. Alas! what madness is this, to boast of holy places, and we ourselves to be such vicious fools! Lucifer was in heaven, and that is most holy place, but for his sin he fell to hell; the place could not hold him. Adam was in paradise, the happiest place, and for his sin he was driven out; the place might not defend him. Thou that art neither in heaven nor in paradise, but in this wretched world, where thinkest thou to find a place to hallow thee that leavest not thy sin? Be thou sure, as God is in heaven, that it will not be; for God is fair served in no place but where his law is fair kept of the people.

Much people deem it a good work to deceive men's eyes with curious buildings, and many vain staring sights in their churches; but Jerome forbids this, and condemns it utterly for great sin, now in this time of Christ's gospel. Many build arches and pillars of the church, they pave with shining marble stones, the beams glister all in gold, the altars are diversely arrayed with precious stones, but of the ministers of God there is no choice. Let no rich man allege the temple in Jewry, boards, lamps, censers, pans, cups, and such other things made of gold, for then these things were approved of the Lord, when priests offered sacrifices, and blood of beasts was remission of sins—though all these things went before in figure, nevertheless they are written for us unto whom the ends of the world are come. But now Christ, our poor Lord, hath hallowed the house or the church of our poverty. Let us bear the cross of Christ, and account riches as clay. Bernard saith, "O vanity among all vanities! and no greater vanity. The church shineth in buildings, and she needeth in the poor. She lappeth her stones in gold, and her sons she forsaketh naked. Of the stores for the needy is made a vain service for rich men's eyes."

But our new, feigned sects, in this are most to blame,

that make great buildings, their least need were of them, as monks, canons, and friars, [nuns, sisters, and hospitalers.] For people should draw to parish churches, and hear the word of God there as God's law hath limited, else they are to blame. What mean these waste places of these hidden hypocrites, but to tell men by their synagogues where Satan's seat is! There lurk together many ravening wolves that despoil the people with many false signs.*

Four reasons of holy writ declared by doctors, shall teach you this great fault if ye will amend. But here I dread, as Paul saith, 2 Cor. iv. that the God of this world, who is called mammon, hath cast his powder before your eyes, and blinded your spiritual sight, that it may not know the gospel, to the true understanding. Each corruptible work, or each work that is rotten in the root, shall fail in the end. And he that is founder of such ungrounded work shall fail, and be worth to nought therewith in the last days. God never planted these new sects in either of his laws, neither approved such manner of life; for Christ in his living pulled them up by the roots that were in his days, as essenes, sadducees, and pharisees, and condemned their ordinances. Each plant, saith Christ, Matt. xv. which my Father of heaven hath not planted, shall be rent up utterly, the roots and all.

The first reason is, These sects are dead from the world, as they say in word. St. Paul teaches in his epistle to the Colossians, Ye that are dead from the manners of this world,

* Langland thus describes a convent of the preaching friars :—

When I came to the court I gaped about,
Such a bild bold* ybuilt upon earth high, (* *Grand seat.*)
Saw I not for certain, since a long time.
I thought upon that house, and earnest thereon looked,
How the pillars were pointed and pulched† full clean, († *Beautified.*)
And quaintly ycarved with curious knots,
With windows well wrought, wide up aloft.

He then minutely describes the expensive ornaments he beheld, and the grandeur of the buildings, and proceeds thus :—

I saw halls full high, and houses full noble,
Chambers with chimneys, and chapels gay,
And kitchens for a high king in castles to hold.
And the dortour‡ ydight with doors full strong, (‡ *Dormitory.*)
And all strong stone walls, stern upon height,
With gay garites and great, and each hole yglazed,
And other houses, enough to harbour the queen.
And yet these builders will beg a bag full of wheat,
Of a pure poor man, that can scarcely pay
Half his rent in a year, and half is behind!

your life is hid with Christ in God; and therefore mortify or make dead your members that are upon earth, which are fornication, foul desires, with corrupt liking of fleshly lusts, and foul covetousness of your heart, and avarice of greedy gathering. For of these cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of misbelief. If ye sects forsake this lore, the wrath of God shall soon assail you.

The second reason against such building is, that business about such costly buildings, with manifold worldly occupation to repair and hold them up, brings in negligence of good manners, quenching virtues and good qualities. Bernard saith, "I see what may not be seen without great sorrow. Some men after they have entered into the knighthood of Christ, that is to forsake this world, and willingly endure painful living, often drown themselves in earthly covetousness, and are employed with worldly deeds, in great business. They rear up houses, but they are negligent in good qualities. What profit is it to have high temples, and their houses gilded with gold, when the Spirit of God is wanting? God hath no delight in such wretched, sinful sects. But God willeth that your temples, which are your own souls, be honoured with holy virtues, and continue to the end in good works."*

The third reason is mighty and strong, it springs with the others from God's law. That such as part themselves from the common life of other men, should always be in this way, as strangers that are far from home, and pilgrims in their pilgrimage. As Paul speaks to the Hebrews, xiii. We have here no dwelling place, but we seek that which is to come.—How dare these men, for shame, with poor men's goods, and pillage of lords, defend their foul apostacy against their God and holy saints, and tell ignorant people by words of hypocrisy that they do thus to God's worship.†

* The principal architects and superintendents of buildings in the middle ages, were monks.

† Langland represents a friar urging a layman to give him money:

We have forsaken the world and in woe live,
And in poverty pray for all our pertainers
That give us any good, God to honour,
Either bell, either book, or bread for our food,
Or cattels, or cloth to cover our bones,
Money, or money-worth, their meed is in heaven!
For we build a burrough, a broad and a large;
A church and a chapter-house, with chambers aloft,
With wide windows ywrought, and walls well high:—
And mightest thou amend us with money of thine own,

The fourth reason is this, God's law chargeth to love thy neighbour as thyself. But this love is best made known by good example in word and deed. In what may these sects profit that here reverse Christ's rule, and give evil example to their neighbours in pride and covetousness, and show themselves richest and most worldly, in meat, clothes, and curious building. Bernard forbids this, saying, "Lowly houses and poor restrain covetousness, and we ought rather to marvel at the sight of heaven, than at the sight of buildings of man's handiwork. Much more should we marvel at the great works of God, than at the works of mortal men that endure but for a time."

All holy saints agree that our material churches, which are for parishioners when they come together, shall be made with virtuous means and in an honest measure. But it must be avoided that in this church there be show or pride, or passing over the bounds of poverty, either in the building or in the ornaments. And diligently this must be marked, that they avoid vain glory of this world, and glorify the cross of God. But this word of Christ's cross is folly to them that shall be damned. Paul commends the coming of Christ and his humbling in his manhood, Ye ought to know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; for when he was rich in all things, he was made poor as man for you, that ye should be rich in spiritual things through this virtuous need of Christ. Christ who blameth all vicious means in the service of his people, will not authorize it to himself or in his house, as saith Matthew xxiv. Mark xiii. and Luke xxi. Christ wept over the city, for man's building stood full strong, but body and soul, which he made to be his own dwelling place, were fallen from keeping of his law, into sin. Christ said, Wo to you scribes and pharisees, that cleanse all that is outward, but within ye are replete with ravening and uncleanness. Ye build the tombs of holy prophets, and wonderfully honour their graves; but ye follow your father's footsteps in pursuing of righteous blood. And these sects do the same, but with more malice in word and deed. How shall ye flee the judgment of hell? Thus saith our Lord Jesus Christ. Whereto make ye shrines for saints, and yet ye draw, hang, and burn them that hold the way of

Thou couldest kneel before Christ in compass of gold,
In the wide window westward, well nigh in the middle;
And St. Francis himself shall fold thee in his cope,
And present thee to the Trinity, and pray for thy sin.

See the extract from Chaucer, Wickliff, p. 76.

Christ, and follow after his holy saints; and though this appear not in outward deed, ye do this slaughter in word and will. As pharisees, with priests, in the third hour, forejudged our Lord with their tongues, and afterwards knights at the sixth hour hanged his body upon the cross; so these sects go before to smite the people with their tongues, and afterwards knights of Herod's house, are full ready to make an end.* But stint thou not, though thou art slandered, if thou live just life; to mend this put to thy hand, and think on Christ's reward, Matt. x. Who that hath lost his life for me, and for the gospel, he shall make his soul safe into the bliss of heaven.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of good and evil coming to the material church.

We shall now speak of two diverse parties that come together to this church, both of good and evil. First we take for our ground where Christ speaketh in parable to his own disciples, Matt. xiii. The kingdom of heaven is like to a net that is sent into the sea, and gathereth together of all kinds of fishes. When this net was full of fishes, the fishers drew it to the land, and they, sitting beside the sea brink, chose the good into their vessels, the evil they sent out, and cast them again into the sea. The second church here on earth is like to a net sent into the sea of this world.†—The fishes that swim in this sea, are all the people that live in this world, both good and evil, of every degree, of each state, temporal or spiritual. And as the great fishes eat the small, so mighty rich men of this world devour the poor.—And thus saith God by the prophet Habakkuk. The prophet seeing in his spirit how rich men waste the poor needy, he maketh mourning to his God; Lord, shalt thou suffer men to be made as fishes that swim in the sea, &c. But for that fishes dread not the hideous waves, whether they rise high or fall low, in this place they shall betoken true belief of man's heart. Christ in the gospel, Luke xi. stirreth us to prayer, saying, Which of you being asked

* The usual course of proceeding against the Lollards, was that after being examined by the ecclesiastics, and sentence pronounced against them, they were delivered to the secular or civil power, and burned alive.

† The author then gives an allegorical exposition of the parable.

of his son, My father, give me a fish, shall he for this fish give him an adder? Nay, plainly, Chrysostom saith upon this text, that this fish is man's faith; and after this we should pray to our Father that is in heaven, that he will stablish us in true belief, and in the articles that belong thereto; for then we shall be well disposed, in the waters of tribulation, to do and to suffer as pleases God, lively joying for this belief; and though there seem peril of death, our conscience shall not abash. For succour is kept for all the faithful, in the treasure of Christ's passion.

The fishers that draw this net, are angels sent before the doom, that shall rightly do God's message, and bring all folks before God almighty, as is written, Joel iii. (12—14.) and there shall he make with them a righteous reckoning upon his people Israel, that is his own heritage. And then shall Christ, with his saints, part the evil from the good. Christ chooseth the good of his church into the vessel of bliss, but the evil they cast out into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

CHAPTER IX.

Of discretion to know the good from the evil.

None may discern these two parties verily from each other, wandering in this second church, for their likeness, and that they have in common many heavenly things. For our Lord hath in his church, labourers about his vineyard, fasters, prayers, and wakers: alms doers are in this church, with preachers, and readers of lessons, and singers also, with ministers of sacraments, with studiers in God's law, and men that make love days.* And the like servants hath the fiend in the third church, but they do their service in a strange manner. Nevertheless they are hard to know, therefore we shall mark how wonderfully they vary in these aforesaid conditions.

Fasters in Christ's church abstain from lusts, to abate their rebel flesh, and keep their bodies clean, and subject to their soul. The soul is not a debtor to follow the life after the flesh, but on contrariwise, the flesh must needs be mortified; and when thou leavest foul desires then is thy flesh mortified. This is the deed that we shall do, this is the office of our warfare. But fasters in the fiend's church fast for ungrounded cause; some fast for hypocrisy, and show

* Times appointed for the settlement of differences.

themselves sorrowful to the people. Such Christ blameth, and calleth them sorrowful hypocrites, Matt. vi. For of the vain praises of man's mouth, they have received all their reward. Some deny themselves both meat and drink, to spare their purse; and Gregory saith, this fasting is for their satchel and not for God! And this is to pain our flesh, and lose our reward, as the wise man saith, Ecclesiasticus vi. Some fast for a medicine, to get them bodily health, neither for God, nor for the soul, but to cleanse their beauty. St. Jerome blames this fasting. "Abstinence of body is holiness to God when the mind fasteth from vices. What profits it to tear the body with hunger, when the mind within swells with pride? What fasting is this to withdraw food, and to rage in envy or foul hastiness?" God saith by the prophet Isaiah lviii. When ye fast ye make strife and debates among yourselves; this is not the fasting that I choose, saith the Lord God. The fiend neither eateth nor drinketh, neither is wrapped in clothes, yet he shall be ever in pain, for he lacketh charity. This then is an evidence that all such reckless fasters are members of the fiend's church in following their father.

*Prayers** that are in Christ's church pray with devotion, with all the strength of their hearts, and their mouths accordingly. Freshly bringing to their minds the kindness of God; how he hath ruled them in this life, and kept them from mischief, as though he had no more than one: so he saveth all them that love him. Then they think on their foul sins, and feel that they have done both wittingly and wilfully against God's will. They have been careless in God's service, and that grieves them sorely. And when they think on this world, how it passes suddenly, and of the torment in hell that damned souls shall suffer, and on the bliss that God hath ordained for his true servants, they find a well that springeth from the heart, and runs forth from their eyes by many warm streams. But prayers* in the fiend's church make much noise, mumbling with their lips. As Christ saith, Matt. xv. This people worship me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. When thy body is in the church, but thy heart in the world, or cumbered with unclean thoughts, and with vain fantasies, and thy tongue in minstrelsy or foolish jangling, and thy wits overset with worldly cares, art not thou then wretchedly divided in thyself? St. James saith, Suppose not, vain

* Those that pray.

man, that he may take any thing of the Lord that suffereth his heart to sleep in sin. And God saith to wicked livers, Isaiah i. When ye have multiplied your prayers, I shall not hear you graciously. Christ saith, Matt. xxiii. Wo to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, that eat the houses of widows by your long prayers; for this ye shall have the larger judgment. Upon this saith Chrysostom, "The sleights or wiles of hypocrites, women may not easily know; and because of their religion they will soon bow to them; for they are tender and wave about as the wind." These flattering glosers most haunt widows' houses. Christ wisheth them wo, and warneth priests that they forsake this sinful manner. For it is too cursed a deed to hide sin under a painted religion, and to clothe wickedness in hypocrisy, till it is believed for very pity; and in the armour of Jesus Christ. They do the fiend's work of hell when they enlarge their long prayers as nets that are spread abroad, and with craft they catch away the goods of these simple widows. These widows we shall understand both for women and for men that want wisdom of Jesus Christ, who is the spouse of man's soul. For Jesus Christ nowhere delights but in them that love his law.

Wakers that are in Christ's church, wake in virtue and devout prayer, and avoid all devices; for they will not be negligent, but keep awake their inward eye, which faithfully sees the works of God, and then rises up, as St. Paul saith, a new man formed after God, and serves him in righteousness, truth, and holiness. This is waking to God's worship and their own salvation, and profits their fellow christian. For St. Paul means, this work chases the fiend, so that he flees from all such wakers, and has no power to hurt body or soul. Certainly the thought foreknown turns away the mind from sin, and great infirmity makes a sober soul.

But wakers in the fiend's church use a fleshly watch, for they are ever slumbering. When any good deed is to be done, they are overcome with the dead sleep that brings them to mischief, as the wise man saith, Proverbs vi. Napping, slumbering, and dead sleep are the fiend's officers. Men nap when they consent to do the fiend's stirring. When they work openly what the fiend desires, in the sight of the world, they are slumbering. But when they maintain boldly whatever they do amiss, then they are in dead sleep, and wake in their sins, changing night into day.

Alms doers in Christ's church, relieve in due time, with

their plenty, them that suffer need, as St. Paul saith, 2 Cor. viii. Look that your abundance fulfil the need of others; for ye, thus doing, shall receive the blessing of God; as Psalm xli. Blessed be he that taketh heed on the needy and poor. In four things God's servants meedfully do their alms. 1. They seek God's will, and do it to his worship. 2. Of true gotten goods, clearly in their conscience. 3. That they know their brother lives a gracious life. 4. That he suffers need without any feigning.

But alms doers in the fiend's church feed many wretches, as strong stiff beggars, and strikers over the land, and groaners without cause, that need not their goods. Yea, to minstrels, to jugglers, and other vain japers, they deal largely their goods and call it alms. But true men say goods are thus dispended all amiss. And if they do any thing as need is, presently they seek vain glory, and lose all their reward. St. Isidore saith, "When the poor man is fed because of vain glory, then the work of mercy is turned into sin." When thine intent is not well ruled, thou gettest no reward whatsoever thou do.

Preachers that are in Christ's church, come freely among the people, as Christ came from heaven, and gave this charge to his disciples, Matt. x. Freely ye have your wisdom, freely give it again. And these preachers preach truly to edify the people in virtue, as Christ commanded his disciples, Mark xvi. Going forth into all the world, preach ye the gospel to each creature, that is to each man.

And they live virtuously themselves, according to their preaching, to strengthen their holy words by the spirit of life, when they give a true example, according to their saying. And this is the teaching of Jesus Christ, Matt. v. Look that your light so shine before men of this world, that they may see your good works, and glorify not you, but your Father that is in heaven, of whom cometh all your grace.

But preachers in the fiend's church, preach under pretence, to take gifts. And they preach chronicles with dreamings, and many helpless tales that are of no avail. They clout falsehood to the truth with much ungrounded matter, hindering the people from true belief. And these preachers waver about in many fleshly lusts, as Jude saith, These are spots, feasting and feeding themselves without any dread, worshipping the persons of men for gain.*

* The like complaints were made of the Romish priests who outwardly conformed to the Reformation, in the reign of Edward VI.

Readers in Christ's church read holy lessons, and attend to their reading with devotion: as Jerome saith, "So read thou holy writ, that thou ever have mind that the words thou readest are God's blessed law, who commanded it not only to be read, but also that the readers should keep it in their works. What profit is it to read things to be done, and not fulfil them in deed? As a clean mirror of life, the lesson of holy writ is to be had, that all which is good may be made better, and that which is evil may be amended." And these readers read diligently that which is treatable, and openly, without interruption, without corrupting, or passing over letter, word, or syllable, and do all things in order.

But readers in the fiend's church jangle their lesson, as jays chatter in the cage, and wot not what they mean; striving for nought of rules of their ordinal* and many vain questions. And if they understand the lesson when it is read, or any part of God's law when it is declared, soon they tread it under foot in their works. God saith by Jeremiah (xlviii.) to these vain readers, Cursed be he that doeth the work of God fraudulently, that is to say, falsely, or deceivably. And Gregory saith, "Only that man doeth no fraud in God's service, who waketh in study of good deeds, and neither boweth to reward of bodily things, nor seeketh the word of man's praising, neither looketh after favour of foolish judgment."

Singers in Christ's church are they that sing heavenly songs, and with their sweet melody please God. As Paul saith, Col. iii. Suffer ye the word of God to dwell plenteously among you in all manner of heavenly wisdom, increasing you in virtue, teaching and admonishing yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing in grace with fervent devotion in your hearts to your God. And whatever ye shall do in word or in work, do ye that perfectly in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, yielding thanks to the Father by that same Jesus Christ. He that is occupied in heavenly desires, though his tongue be still, and make no noise, he sings a song, as St. Augustine saith, that God liketh best.

But singers in the fiend's church break curious notes. And that is but a puff of wind, as saith St. Bernard wisely, "To please the people with their voice, and to fill their ears with vain din." But St. Gregory saith, according with St. Bernard, "When fair and glosing voice is sought, perfect

* The Romish service book, which was very complicated.

life is forsaken, and the people are led into sin;" as God saith by his prophet Ezekiel xxxiii. (31, 32.) And again by Amos v. Do thou away from me the pride of thy chanting, and I shall not hear the songs of thy harp. What may this mean that priests in the churches give themselves so much to song, and so little to preaching? In few places or none of the new testament shall we ground this manner of song, neither among our doctors. But they are often charged to preach, under great pain, and always that they do what they may that the people be truly taught to lead a sober life. Therefore Gregory smote them with a curse that busied themselves in the court of Rome about such feigned singing, whereby the office of preaching was hindered.

Ministers of sacraments that are in Christ's church, bethink them how these sacraments come of Christ and of his holy passion, taken of his blessed body for treasure of his church, and they are salve and medicine for all those sick members that will show their sores to God's priests of wise discretion, and use these sacraments in their kind. As St. Paul teaches, 1 Cor. v. Christ is offered our Passover, that nourisheth us with his sacraments, and therefore let us rejoice in this spiritual food, not in anger, and malice, and wickedness; but in the fair, pure, bread of holiness and of truth. These two virtues teach us to cleanse body and soul, whether we give or take these sacraments.*

But ministers that are in the fiend's church, minister these sacraments, and treat them unworthily, and all such, both learned and ignorant, are in spirit children of Judas. Thus it is with the fiend's children when they receive the sacraments; they go to them unworthily, and so to their damnation—some there are, as Simon's heirs, that sell these sacraments; and some are ready with their money, as chapmen in a fair, to buy of these merchants, merit, as they suppose. But both the buyers and the sellers merit endless pain. Some make letters for the more subtle hypocrisy, to sell all their suffrages;† wherever they find chapmen that will pay largely, then is the bargain made. How study these limbs of the fiend in the deeds of the apostles, where such merchandise is condemned, as it is said of Simon Magus, Acts viii? These that we have

* The seven sacraments of the church of Rome are then specified.

† Prayers. The writer enlarges on the sale of the sacraments in the church of Rome.

marked are Simon's heirs, for they think when they have money to grant the people these spiritual gifts. But Peter blamed this man, and gave a rule that ever shall last, that curses and condemns both the givers and the takers. Judas made a covenant with the Jews and sold his master, Jesus Christ, whose death is our redemption; but therefore his name is, cursed Judas; but his children do much worse in selling the sacraments, and for less price, that are not mortal, and may not suffer. Neither any profits come of such sale, but vengeance here and elsewhere. Alas! when will these wretches beware?

Studiers in Christ's church, study day and night, in the law of the Lord, as the prophet saith, Psalm i. Well is it with him that so may study to find these precious fruits, to make fair their own soul with flowers of holy writ. Then Christ will take his resting place in the chamber of their conscience. St. Jerome counsels in his prologue upon the bible, "I pray thee, brother, that thou have thy study in thy mind, among the lessons that are in holy writ; busy thee nothing else to know, nothing else to seek. Set thine heart in holy study, and pursue after with all thy strength, and thou shalt in short while find it more sweet than the honeycomb."

But studiers in the fiend's church study in their made laws, all for riches, and for pride, and for their worldly worship. Yea, so far that scarcely any man is found who abideth with God's law clear without meddling, but draweth him to man's law, for that savours of gain, and there they study earnestly and sorely. But at their last end this shall be their payment, as God saith by his prophet Jeremiah, Cursed must that man be that setteth his faith in man, and suffereth his heart to go away from his Lord God, &c. (xvii. 5, 6.)

Such men slander Christ, who is both God and man, and hath both hallowed his laws with his precious death, and hath put in them the Spirit of life by the quickening of his blood, to rear souls from death, and bring them again to life. Christ saith, John xi. Whoso believeth in me, yea, though he be dead he shall live again, both in grace and in glory. But it is not in man's law, that may give this power. Then is this foul slander of them that study in man's law as if it were the better, and therefore such froward thoughts part their souls from God. Of all these Jeremiah speaks, vi. (13—15.)

Peacemakers in Christ's church move men to the rest

that Christ promised to his disciples when he was here among them, John xiv. My peace I give you, my peace I leave with you. His peace he left with us when he went to heaven. His peace he shall give us in the world's end. His peace he gave to us, to help us in this world. His peace he shall grant to us, to solace us in bliss. He hath left us his peace to be our trusty clothing, for if we are clad therein we shall overcome our enemies. He shall grant us his peace, and then we shall be sure to reign, world without end, without any enemies. He hath left us his peace that we deem not falsely of our neighbours beside us, of things that are uncertain. He shall give to us peace, when he shall make known the hidden thoughts of man's heart; and then shall be praising of every man to God, after he hath discerned. Christ hath left among us peace, that we should love together, hating sin and loving virtue, for thus he loved us. For there is no charity unless sin be hated and plucked up by the roots in us and all others. Then Christ shall give us full peace when we may never be at discord. Thus saith St. Augustine.

Now ground we upon this in our minds that these peace-makers, for that they would have this peace among them, stand armed at all pieces, for dread of their enemies, in the armour of Jesus Christ, that Paul teaches, Eph. vi. Six armours the apostle rehearses that arm the soul, five to defend, the sixth to assail. 1. A girdle of chastity, (truth,) and thereby we may know that Paul speaks of the knowledge of the soul, and leaves bodily armour. Take up this girdle, that ye may stand perfect in the peace of your soul, against all fleshly stirrings. 2. An habergeon of righteousness is the second armour, that is thick mailed, for falsehood should not enter to grieve God or man, or disturb this true peace. 3. Leg harness, or showing of affections in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and then they are disposed to make peace among men. Not as the world asketh, but that they stand perfectly in all adversity, with Christ and his gospel to the death day. 4. A shield of faith. In this they shall quench all the fiend's burning darts, that are his temptations. Then may no deadly blow steal upon that man who hath the shield of true belief hanging on his heart. 5. A helm of health,* which is called trusty hope; for it bears off the strokes the fiend throws at man's soul, with pitiless gins;† the one is

* Helmet of salvation. † Engines.

obstination or hardness of heart, the other is desperation or wanhope.* But whoso hath the helm of hope, though strokes light on him, they shall in no wise burst his head-piece or sink into his soul. Therefore he liveth peaceably in hope of God's mercy. 6. Is the sword of the Spirit, that is God's word. With this sword Jesus Christ assailed the fiend of hell, when Christ said, Go, Satan; and he fled away. For this sword is full sharp, and biteth on both sides; it parteth at a stroke the soul from the body; and it parteth in this life virtue from sin; and it shall part at doomsday the good from the evil. God give us grace to take this sword, for all that take up this sword, and stand in this armour, Christ our Captain blesseth them, and calleth them his children, Matt. v. Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the sons of God. And Christ saith, Love ye your enemies; do ye well to them that hate you, and pray for your pursuers and your slanderers; that ye may be the sons of your Father that is in heaven.

But peace-makers in the fiend's church confederate together in a false peace, after the manner of this world. This Christ's gospel condemns, Matt. x. Luke xii. where he saith, I come not to maintain vicious peace. And this, sinful wretches throw under feet. Faith, truth, and righteousness, they count at no price; for they lead the country after their own pleasure. David sorrowed for this mischief, Ps. xiii. But priests and knights are most to blame for this sin. Priests that should be spiritual physicians, and reconcile the people by good counsels to their God, and heal them with his law; what with pride and covetousness, and many fleshly lusts, they are so blinded that they know no wisdom. And they fail spiritual sight and wisdom to search into any spiritual sickness; or to search about the peril of a wound; yet they are presumptuous to offer false medicine, and undertake great cures to make men whole. But they hurt them much sorer than they were before, as the Lord moveth by the prophet Jeremiah, viii. (11, 12.) And he saith, xxiii. Hear ye not the words of these preachers, that preach and deceive you; they speak the vision of their heart, but not of the Lord's mouth; they say to those that blaspheme me, The Lord speaketh that peace shall be to you. And they have said to each that walketh in the wickedness of his heart, There shall no evil come upon you. The gospel beareth witness, Matt. xv. When the blind lead the blind, fall they not both

* Despair.

into the lake? Yes, plainly. These preachers are no preachers, but only in name, as a lushborne* is called a penny that is worth nought.

Knights also are to blame, that misuse their power and will not read in God's law, nor learn their office, and therefore the wise man blameth them in the sixth chapter of the book of Ecclesiasticus. How should ye knights maintain peace when ye forsake it yourselves? These priests and knights, through their vicious deeds, lead the commons in their ways, and hold them in sin, so that all this world is set in uproar, in battle, and in war. But now are proved the words that God hath said by the prophet Jeremiah, ix. to teach his chosen servants, And shall I not visit upon these things, saith the Lord God, shall not my will be venged upon such a folk?

But haply here some will say, God will not take vengeance upon his christian people; God will not lose that which he dearly bought with his precious blood. To the first we answer by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah, xvi. The Lord saith, Your fathers have forsaken me, and gone after strange gods—but ye do much worse than your fathers ever wrought. Lo, each of you walketh after the wickedness of his evil heart, that he hears not me, saith the Lord God, and I shall cast you away into a land that is unknown to you, and to your fathers, and there ye shall do service to alien gods, that shall give no rest to you, day nor night.

To the second we answer, as Christ saith, Matt. xxii. Friend, how enteredst thou hither, not having the bridal garment? And he was dumb. Then this king, Jesus Christ, said to his ministers, Bind this wretch hand and foot, and send him into the utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Understand by this, both man and woman that hold the name, but want the works of true belief. Therefore Christ awardeth them to the pains of hell.

CHAPTER X.

How the Good of the second Church, accord with the first Church.

Faith, hope, and charity, as we have said, unite God and man together in the unity of this church. This knot

* Or Lushburgh.—Base money coined abroad in the reign of Edward III., to counterfeit the English coin.—*Leake's Account of English Money.*

is knit so surely, that it shall never more fail, neither here nor elsewhere. As the wise man saith, Ecc. iv. A threefold cord full loth is brosten.*—Then we shall draw nigh to our God, through grace, mercy, and righteousness, till we see God in Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Every member of this church helpeth what it may to work a part of this cord, for the common profit.

All the members of a man travail in their order, each to succour the other; and none to hinder, but to do their common help to the profit of the body. Thus it is of the members that are in Christ's church. For it is a godly body, that groweth with her members. One faileth, but another helpeth. Some have much wisdom to know holy writ; some have fair eloquence to preach to the people; some have much spiritual strength to suffer tribulation; some have pity, and relieve their poor needy neighbours; some attend virtuously to ministrations; some rise highly in heavenly desires. But all such things are in common to them that shall be saved; as in Psalm cxix. the prophet speaketh in the person of the general church, Lord, I am partner of all that dread thee, and of all that keep thy holy commandments. This is also taught in the creed of the apostles, of the communing of saints.

Whoever separates from the unity of stedfast faith, and the fellowship of this church, he may neither be absolved from the bonds of his sins, neither may he come into the bliss of heaven. See now then, both learned and unlearned, how prayers and all other suffrages† are in common to this spiritual church. Whence then comes this outcry that is heard? the keen sale in every church to sell these spiritual things, with suffrages and absolutions, with many years of pardon, and a plenary indulgence from fault and punishment ?‡ Certainly they come from beneath, of the fiend's

* Broken.

† The united voice of persons in public prayer.

‡ The sale of indulgences was carried to a very great extent; they were vended in shops in Lombard-street like any other commodity, and pardoners travelled about the country selling them in the churches, wherever they could find purchasers. See note Wickliff, p. 131. Hollinshed mentions the sale of indulgences by the cardinal of Praxed who visited England in 1381. "He was very liberal in bestowing of them upon all such as would come with money. Indulgences which the pope had used to reserve for himself only to bestow, this man granted with the same liberality." After mentioning some instances of this "liberality," and that the monks of the Cisteaux obtained a general license to eat flesh any where for forty pounds, he adds, "To those that were excommunicate he gave absolution—to be brief,

tempting, and are borne about of his accursed members, to poison the people in misbelief, and drive them to endless pain.

CHAPTER XI.

Of Joy and Tribulation.

But for that we reprove these sins, this evil party grudges and pursues with strong hand, to imprison, and to slay. Therefore must we learn the lore of Christ's holy gospel, Matt. v. Ye are blessed when men have cursed you, and have pursued you, and said all evil against you falsely for my sake; joy and be merry, for your reward is great in heaven. And also St. Peter saith, 1 Pet. iii. When ye suffer any thing for righteousness, blessed must ye be. St. Paul affirms this sentence, that God's true servants shall have pain in this life, to keep them in virtue, 2 Tim. iii. All that ever will live meekly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. And St. Luke saith of the words of Paul, in the Deeds of the Apostles, By many tribulations it behoves us to enter into the realm of God. And thus saith the prophet in the Psalms; Many are the tribulations that fall to the righteous, and from them all, when time cometh, God shall deliver them. Christ promised this manner of life to his own disciples, and gave them comfort, that they should have a gracious deliverance. For then shall bliss be much the sweeter, when they come thereto, John xvi. Truly I say unto you the truth, Ye shall lament and weep, but this world shall have joy; and ye shall be heavy; and afterwards your heaviness shall be turned into joy; and your joy shall be so sure that no man shall take it from you.

And that this joy should savour well to them that love him, he shall send them tribulation. As St. Gregory saith, "God showeth to his chosen, sharpness in this journey, lest if they delighted them in this earthly way, they might forget

nothing could be asked, but for money he was ready to grant it.—At length his mails were so filled with silver, that his servants disdained to make answer to any except they brought gold, saying, Bring us gold, for we are full of your silver. But at his departure he took all away with him, both gold and silver in such abundance as was marvellous. This hath been the practice of the Romanists from time to time." Sometimes pardons were to be had upon cheaper terms, as the "Hours of the virgin, ad usum Sarum," contains prayers, on saying of which before an image, 32,750 years of pardon were granted! Sixtus IV., pope A. D. 1471, added two more prayers, and liberally doubled the pardon!

the things that are in the heavenly country." Tribulations that bruise us down in this wretched world, constrain us to go to God, who else might easily be in condemnation. For the eyes that sin closes, pain makes open; and many a man that followeth theft, with many other sins, if by God's visitation he were lame, blind, or crooked, he should cease, and serve his God, and do penance full truly. The flesh dreads not spiritual pains to come, but it dreads to suffer any pains in this life. Therefore the evil cease not to do sin, unless judgments upon their flesh constrain them to be still. And for this cause the Lord shall send upon his servants sore punishing to their flesh, and other tribulations. The lust of the flesh may be swelled from the coveting of evil. We must needs break the nut if we will have the kernel. We must needs suffer travail if we desire rest. So must we needs suffer pain if we will come to bliss. He is a false coward knight that fleeth and hideth his head, when his master is in the field, beaten, among his enemies. But our Lord Jesus Christ was beaten of the Jews, and afterwards died in the field, on the mount of Calvary, to pay our ransom. He took his death, for he was nothing guilty; and his body when it was offered, made a satisfaction at full, in redemption of mankind. Therefore the wise man saith in the book of Ecclesiasticus, Forget not thou the kindness of thy surety, for he hath given his life for thee. This surety is our Lord God, who without meed (freely) came from heaven into this world to redeem his people. And in taking flesh and blood of the virgin Mary, he showed us grace and kindness, both in word and working. But in giving of his life he laid his body in pledge, yea to the death he would not spare to suffer extreme pain, so much he loved his people. If faith be true in us, this may not be forgotten.

Some men forsake sins and follow Christ in virtue, and this is a great kindness, though they go no higher. Some wake in abstinence and study holy lessons; this is kindness, if they flee from sin. Some are ready, when they are called of the Holy Ghost, to suffer death for Jesus Christ, and in witness of his law; and when they have holiness of life, this is the greatest kindness, as the gospel shows, John xv. A greater love or charity may no man have, than to lay down his life in saving of his friend's soul. We were pleasing and dear to God when we took baptism, but we are much dearer when we do the works that God hath bidden in his law, without any grudging. And if we maintain this

belief, and will not go therefrom, neither become renegades for pain that may befall, but think on Christ's passion, which assuages all heaviness, then are we most dear-worthy, and worthy highest merit.

Therefore saith St. Paul to the Galatians, Far be it from me to make any glory, but in the cross (that is the passion) of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom this world is crucified to me, and I am crucified to the world. For this world despised Paul, and he despised the world. Some are not crucified to the world, but the world is crucified to them; for they despise this world, but the world despises not them. Some are crucified to the world, but not so the world to them; for though the world despise them, they despise it not again. Some are neither crucified to the world, nor the world to them; for neither do they despise the world, nor the world them. In the first degree were the apostles; and in the second are other good livers. But in the third and fourth degree are those that shall be damned. And therefore we should understand that as some suffer pain to save the people when they might not save themselves, so did Jesus Christ, and showed his great kindness. Some suffer pain, and enlarge their reward as did Christ's apostles, and many other martyrs. Some suffer pain to cleanse them of their past sins, and cry to God for mercy. Some suffer pain to keep them from sin, with which they should be encumbered if there were no pain. But some suffer pain because they haunt sin; and as they make no end thereof, the pain shall last without end. Join we then the cross of Christ to our bare flesh, that our part may be found among those holy saints who willingly forsook themselves, and joyed in tribulation; as St. James saith, My brethren, hope ye all joy when ye have slidden among divers temptations, knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience; since patience hath a perfect work; that ye may be perfect in soul, and whole in body, and in nothing failing.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Fiend's contrivances, by which, in his members, he pursues the keepers of God's commands.

The evil part of this church shall never cease to pursue good livers with what malice they may. But, for his chosen

children, God shall abridge the days of their madness, and that shall men well know, as St. John saith to the church, and giveth it good comfort, Rev. ii. Dread thou not those things that thou art to suffer. Lo, the devil is to send some of you into the prison, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I shall give to thee a crown of life. He that hath ears of hearing, hear he what the Spirit saith to the churches. Whoso hath overcome, shall not be hurt of the second death. By this devil, understand all the evil people that shall pursue good livers unto the world's end, sometimes more, sometimes less, with divers pains of tormenting. And understand by these ten days the ten commandments; for they are light to man's understanding in the darkness of this world. And here it seems good to tell the fiend's contrivances that he uses in his members, against God's commands, and as clouds obscure the day, so he marreth men's understanding.

[The author then proceeds to explain the ten commandments, stating the errors of the church of Rome in regard to each. This occupies more than a fourth part of his whole work, but only an abstract is here given.]

The first (and second) Command.

Against this command, the fiend lays two snares; the first is the obedience that he claims to himself or his lieutenants. Under the latter appellation is included the Romish prelates and priests, who claim obedience to their will, rather than to the word of God. Obedience to superiors is enforced, excepting when their commands are opposed to the divine will. "The second trap of the fiend is called pilgrimage." "The painter maketh an image, forged with divers colours, till it seem to fools' eyes a living creature. This is set in the church in a solemn place, fast bound with bonds that it should not fall. Priests of the temple beguile the people with the foul sin of Balaam* in their open preaching. They say that God's power in working of his miracles, abides in one image more than in another, and therefore, Come and offer to this, for here is showed much power. How dare these fiends for dread, thus blaspheme their God, and use the sin of Balaam which God's law hath condemned, since Christ and his disciples forsook this world's wealth, and lived a poor life? Why gather ye priests, by

* Covetousness; "the wages of unrighteousness," 2 Pet. ii. 15.

your painted images, to make yourselves worldly rich by spoiling the people? And yet ye do much worse, for both ye and your consenters, doing thus, are mere idolaters."

Several appropriate passages from scripture, and the fathers, are then quoted against this idolatry.

"Thou shalt not vow to these images, thou shalt not swear by them, neither kneel to them, nor kiss them, nor put faith, hope, or trust, in one image more than another. And thus meaneth God, when he saith, thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them."*

Six manners of true pilgrimage are then described. 1. Every citizen of the heavenly country is a pilgrim of this world for all time of this present life. 2. We are pilgrims when we go to church. 3. When we visit the needy. 4. Priests are pilgrims that study holy writ till they have plenty of this heavenly wisdom in their mind; and then they go about in all the broad world to deal this spiritual treasure among the ignorant people. 5. Those that dwell in a town where there is neither priest nor lord, to teach or rule them, and those that go to a place where they may be taught, and ruled under governance. 6. "There is no other pilgrimage that may please God beside these, as all holy men bear witness; for when the body is laid in the grave, and the soul passed forth to bliss or pain, then the sixth is ended."

The second (third) Command.

Here reference is made to the course then pursued relative to the Lollards. The fiend and his members "constrain men to swear and lay their hands on books, and then put them to open shame; and if they leave his bidding, he saith by law they are relapsed, and then they shall be burned. And this is a hideous cloud upon the shining day, to pain men for keeping God's commandments."† Unnecessary oaths are then condemned by the authority of the

* The form of oath imposed on four Lollards at Nottingham, may be seen in Wilkin's Concilia. (iii. 225.) It commences thus; "I, William Dynot, before you, worshipful father and lord archbishop of York, and your clergy, with my free will, and full advised, swear to God, and to all his saints upon the holy gospel, that from this day forward, I shall worship images with praying and offering to them, in the worship of the saints that they be made after, and also that I shall never more despise pilgrimages, nor states of holy church, in no degree, &c." See the note on pilgrimages, p. 137.

† This passage shows the work must have been written after the burning of Sawtree, the FIRST who suffered open martyrdom in England. He was condemned as a relapsed heretic.

fathers. "Thou shalt not swear but with three conditions. 1. Truth in the conscience of him that sweareth, without any guile. 2. That it be in doom, to exclude all idle and vain swearing. 3. That it be in righteousness, (or justice,) and in no manner of deceit." Swearing by saints, and all profane oaths are then condemned.

The third (fourth) Command.

"Against this commandment, the fiend and his members give leave to chapmen to buy and sell, yea within the sanctuary, on the holy Sunday; and victuallers of the country hold common markets. Yet see more against this command of God. The great fairs of the year, for the most part, are set on the sabbath day, by the fiend's counsel."* The conduct of Nehemiah in repressing the like evils at Jerusalem is then referred to, and the greater perfection of the christian dispensation is described as enforcing more perfect and spiritual obedience to God's will in this respect. Many passages of scripture are quoted.

The fourth (fifth) Command.

The reciprocal duties of parents and children are enforced. The state of the ecclesiastics who had assumed temporal authority is animadverted upon, and their grasping of worldly possessions is shown to be contrary to the word of God. The wide difference between the lives of many of the Romish saints and of St. Peter and St. Paul is then noticed.

The fifth (sixth) Command.

"Thou shalt not slay. Neither in malice with pursuing; neither in word with backbiting; neither with deed in unlawful shedding of blood." Passages of scripture are quoted in explanation, showing also how far it is lawful "to smite for the cause of righteousness."

"Against this commandment the fiend and his members watch, and busily spy where they may find any people that will read, in private or openly, God's law in English, that is our mother tongue. And he shall be summoned to come before his judges, to answer what is said to him, and to bring his book with him; and he must forsake his book and reading of English, and forswear ever to speak of holy writ. They say, Live as thy father did, that is enough for thee, or else thou shalt to prison, as if thou wert a

* Some remains of these still exist.

heretic, and suffer pains many and strange ; and full likely be put to death, unless thou wilt revoke thy word, and make an open wonderment at thy parish church, or in public place.* And with this they prison many a hungry soul, whereof groweth in this realm a grievous spiritual murrain. For who dare now, in these days, talk of Christ and the doom? And assuredly the body may not live without bodily food, no more may the seely† soul without God's word. As St. Augustine saith, The soul dieth for hunger, unless it be fed with heavenly bread, and this bread is God's word, as Christ saith in his gospel, Matt. iv. Deut. viii. Luke iv. A man liveth not only in bodily bread, but he liveth a better life after the soul, of each word that passeth from the mouth of God. God told long before, of this hunger to come ; that untaught men should ask this bread, and no man should give it to them, as he saith by the prophet Amos, viii. For though there are many preachers, there are few true preachers ; and if any preach the truth, the multitude shall gainsay him, and thus men abide still in their spiritual hunger, for they know not whom to follow, their preaching is so wonderful, joining in their curious words the truth to the falsehood. Who that goeth to this bread to slake his hunger, though he were as holy as ever was St. John the Baptist, he should not fail to be slandered for a cursed Lollard, or pursued as a heretic, of those cruel enemies." The writer then strongly urges that "priests are much to blame who take from the people the law that God hath written in their heart."

The sixth (seventh) Command.

The application of this command to sight, thought, and deed is enforced from scripture. The conduct of the Romish ecclesiastics in suffering those who have been cited

* The penance or "wonderment" here referred to was no trifle—The sentence pronounced against Pye and Mendham of Aldborough, in 1428, was, that they should suffer "six fustigations or disciplinings (floggings) about their parish church, before a solemn procession, six several Sundays, and three disciplinings about the market-place of Herelstone three principal market-days, bare necked, head, legs, and feet, their bodies being covered only with their shirts and breeches, each carrying a taper of a pound weight, which were to be offered at the high altar after mass in every of the days. And that each of them, going about the market-place, shall make four several pauses and stays, and at each of the same humbly and devoutly receive three disciplinings." The penances were often still more severe ; and fastings and imprisonment were added.

† Simple, ignorant.

for these evils, to continue therein upon payment of money from their purse to my lord's alms, while a pretence is made in their weekly courts to treat them with severity, is minutely described, and that, "Now they set ordinaries for their worldly profit, that heap their purse with many sold sins."

The seventh (eighth) Command.

"Thou shalt not do theft: neither knights by tyranny; nor priests by hypocrisy; nor commons by stealth and robbery." Examples from scripture are then given. The conduct of the ecclesiastics in obtaining large donations to expend in their buildings and monastic endowments is severely censured. "Whoso clothes himself with such goods, or feeds him with such goods, or rears up buildings with such gotten goods, is clad, is fed, and grounds his buildings in poor men's blood. Some men say, It is no sin to take what men will give them. Some men say they will spend their goods where they have most devotion. Some leave house, land, water, and wood to dead hands.* To you we ask, What profiteth the hand without fingers, or the fingers without hand? If either of them may work his work to men's profit without the other, then may ye say, that devotion may profit without discretion, or else not." The system of monastic life is then censured.

The eighth (ninth) Command.

"Thou shalt not speak false witness against thy neighbour. Neither for gifts taking, nor for man's stirring, nor thyself in sin excusing." Several passages of scripture against these sins are then cited. Jurors who take bribes, and false witnesses, are severely censured. The painful state of society at that time is thus described. "There is no officer, temporal or spiritual, but is ready when he may, to take gifts of the poor commons, and pill them continually. Else they shall have no peace from grievous oppressions, as the taking of their beasts, corn, and other victuals; and other payment get they none but a white stick,† till they have lost one half with much more labour." The examples of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xix. and others are referred to.

* Bequests to monastic establishments—in mortmain.

† Perhaps, tallies given to those from whom provisions had been taken under pretence of supplying the king. So late as the reign of queen Elizabeth, considerable abuses prevailed among the royal purveyors.

The ninth (tenth, first part) Command.

"In this command God refraineth the inordinate appetite of man's desire, in all things that are immovable." The evils of covetousness are exposed in strong colours. "Some feed their covetousness with lust and delectation in thought, in word, in work, and this most abominable. All these three are against the commandment of God, and are worthy of endless pain; unless God, through his gracious mercy, move them to virtue and to true penance, that are dead in these foul covetings, that is to say, in covetousness of heart, of deed, and of custom. How should he keep himself from a vicious deed, that doth not put out of his heart the coveting thereof? Certainly it is as impossible as to save the house from burning that thou settest on fire with thine own hands. A weed may not be destroyed unless it be drawn up by the roots. No more may sin be left unless the delectable coveting of sin be pulled out of the heart. For if there abide any part of this foul coveting undrawn up in heart, anon there springeth up thereof, theft, false purchase, and such other." It is then shown that "Covetousness is cause of much blood-shedding." The conduct of the ecclesiastics, who say, "that they may purchase out of the secular hand, yea, all their livelihood, if they might win it by one way or another, while what they win into their power no man may reclaim into the hands of seculars," is commented upon severely. The circumstances attending Eve's temptation are allegorically applied to this sin, also many examples from scripture are mentioned.

The tenth (second part) Command.

This command is especially applied to evil desires, the inward sin of the heart, in those things that are movable. "When the strength of our will is set to do righteousness, then we are conformed to do the Father's bidding; and when the wisdom of our will is turned to mercy, both to ourselves and to others, then we follow Christ's steps. But when the love of our will speedeth in due order, both in heaven and in earth, as we have said before, then dwelleth the Holy Ghost in our inward man. If this knot be truly knit in the will of our soul, there is no entry from the devil can trouble us from unity. As St. Jerome saith, "The devil fighteth not against us with open face, but with guile; for he uses against us our own will; he takes strength by our own

consent, and he makes war against us with our own sword. He may never overcome us but through our own will, therefore, far be desperation." "Remedy against this devil is study in holy writ. God's commandments are a LANTERN and the law is LIGHT, and the way of life, Prov. vi."

In applying this command to the conduct of the Romish ecclesiastics, the practice of their courts respecting divorces is described and severely censured—he that "goeth to the masters that sit on their seats with furred hoods, and fond* heads, and giveth them money great plenty, and prayeth them to be his advocates, that his divorce were made," alleging some precontract. "Then the judge, sir Simon,† giveth his doom to dissolve true wedlock, and authorizes both parties to live evil life from that day forward." Examples and counsels from scripture are dwelt upon, and "thinking of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ" is recommended. "This is a special remedy to withhold wicked thoughts, desires, and wills, that they flow not too deeply within, nor fly too far without, and such travails thrive those that God hath chosen."

The observations on the commandments conclude as follows.

St. Hilary saith, "This property hath Christ's church; when it is pursued, it flourisheth; when it is bruised down, it groweth; when it is despised, it profiteth; when it is hurt, it overcometh; when it is blamed, it understandeth; and it standeth most strongly when it seems to man's eye to be overcome." This church is a true soul, as we have said before. Some that are tender and feeble to suffer, cry with the prophet Habakkuk, Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou shalt not hear me? Lord, till when shall I call upon thee thus suffering strong tribulation, and thou shalt not make me safe? Why hast thou showed me wickedness and travail, and sufferest theft and unrighteousness against me? Why beholdest thou despisers, and art still—the wicked man defouling the juster than he? St. Jerome, in his prologue, saith, that these are words of man's impatience, and he setteth an example of a sick man swelling in a fever, who asketh cold water, saying to his physician, "I suffer wo, and am all tormented; I am full nigh dead; how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear me?" The wise and the most merciful physician answers him, "I know at what time it behoves me to give thee what thou askest. I have no pity on

* Foolish. † Simony.

thee now, for that mercy were cruelty, and thine own will asketh against thyself. Also our Lord God, knowing the weight and the measure of his mercy, sometimes hears not speedily him that crieth, that he may prove and more stir him to pray; and as examined by the fire, that he may make his servant both juster and purer to receive grace and meed."

CHAPTER XIII.

What is the Fiend's church, with its properties.

I now speak of the third church, belonging to the devil, which is the number of those that are in bondage to serve him, according to his enticings, against God's commands.

First, we shall take our ground in the words of Ps. xxvi. I have hated the church of malicious livers. These are they that stray away after their own desires, walking in the large way that leadeth them to hell. They will be governed neither by law nor by grace; neither will they for dread nor love cease and go from sin, because this world is full of lusts, and proffers its lovers a joy that soon passeth away; but they that seek after bliss suffer pain here. Therefore, fools without number joy with this world, as Christ saith, Matt. vii. Enter ye by the strait gate; for large is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to damnation, and many there are that enter by it. How painful is the gate and how strait is the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it. For St. John saith, 1 John ii. All this world, that is, all those men and women that are overcome with this world, are set in malice; that is, burning in the fire of foul covetousness. For all that is in this world, either is the covetousness of the eye, or else the desire of the flesh, or else it is the pride of this life. And therefore this church is grounded upon the devil, in the gravel of false covetousness, as Paul saith, 1 Tim. vi. For the root of all evils is covetousness, which some desiring, have erred from true belief, and have joined themselves to many sorrows.

The rearing up of this church is in gluttony and licentiousness, as the wise man saith in the book of Wisdom, (ii.) when rehearsing the words of those that shall be damned. And the raising of this church is pride and highness of life, as the prophet saith. (Ps. xxxvii.) I have seen the unpiteous and the wicked raised and uplifted as the cedar trees of

Libanus, and they are the highest trees of this world. But as smoke rises suddenly, and soon vanishes to nought, so the proud are praised for a time, and presently they fall away, and we know not where they become.

The prophet speaks, (Ps. lv.) of the business and occupation of dwellers of this church. Night and day wickedness shall compass about this church upon her walls, and travail in the midst of it; and unrighteousness, deceit, and treachery have not ceased in her ways. Of this church, with this manner of building, Christ speaks in his gospel, Matt. vii. Luke vi. Whoso heareth my words, and doeth them not, shall be like a foolish man, that hath built his house upon the gravel of covetousness and misbelief. And the rain of gluttony and lechery came down on this church, and the winds of pride blew upon this church; and these sins fell fiercely upon this church and drove it down, and her fall was great, for she fell from grace and glory to pain and mischief without end. As St. Augustine saith, "That is not the body of the Lord which shall not be with him without end; for hypocrites are not said to be with him, though they seem to be in his church."

Certainly the devil is head of all the wicked, which are in some manner his body, to go with him into the torment of everlasting fire. For when they took baptism they promised faith and truth to keep God's commands, as the prophet saith, speaking in the person of all the general church, Ps. cxix. Lord, I have sworn and ordained to keep thy commandments. Upon this covenant Christ took them to his marriage; and with the ring of stedfast faith he solemnized his holy spousal. But now they leave this chaste love, our Lord Jesus Christ, in breaking this covenant, and have chosen the fiend, who is a spouse-breaker. For St. John Chrysostom saith, "Every soul either is Christ's spouse, or an adulteress of the devil." For Christ and the devil may in no wise rest together in man's soul; for they are so contrary, that whatever the one biddeth, the other forbiddeth. Christ seeketh salvation, the fiend damnation; Christ loveth virtue, the fiend loveth sin; Christ gathereth together, the fiend scattereth abroad. As Paul saith, 2 Cor. vi. What participation of righteousness is there with wickedness? What fellowship is there of light to darkness? What communication of Christ with Belial? Or what part is there of a faithful man with an unfaithful man? Or what consent of the temple of God to idols? Certainly none;

for each of these gainsays the other according to its own working.

Now we shall tell what they are that dwell with the fiend, to serve him in his church, that is, in the temple of idols. Paul saith, 1 Cor. vi. These are vile speakers, liars, glossers, backbiters, murderers, swearers, and forswearers. As St. John saith, Rev. xxi. To all liars, their part shall be in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, that is the second death. There are unchaste, robbers and extortioners, tyrants and oppressors. For the prophet saith, Zech. v. There are untruth-tellers, unfaithful servants, reckless hired-men, rebellious disciples, and unprofitable labourers. For Christ saith, Matt. xxv. Cast ye out the unprofitable servant into outward darknesses. There are all unclean men and women, as St. John saith, Rev. xxii. and as Christ saith, Matt. xxiv. The Lord shall put his part with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. There are all that pray, serve or give gifts for church or spiritual benefices; all false possessioners, all mighty, wilful oppressors, and all their sturdy maintainers. For St. Jude saith, Wo to them that went the way of Cain, and were evil by the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. There are the men that boose out their breasts, pinch in their bodies, part their hose, crakowin (carve) their shoes, and all disguisers of their garments. There are those that nicely dress their faces, that bridle their heads with head-bands, that set above honeycombs, with much other attiring to make themselves keen to sin, and expose themselves to catch men with their lime-twigs. For God saith by the prophet Isaiah, Because the daughters of Zion are become so proud, and come with stretched forth necks, and with vain, wanton eyes, seeing they come in tripping so nicely with their feet, I will make bald and smite the daughters of Zion.* There are

* The luxury and absurdity of dress, both of men and women, at that time was carried to great excess. Petrarch describes the young men as "having their bodies so cruelly squeezed with cords, that they suffer as much pain from vanity, as the martyrs suffered for religion." The English beau of the fourteenth century wore long, pointed shoes, fastened to his knees by gold or silver chains, their tops carved in imitation of a church window, hose of two colours, short tight breeches, with a coat also of two colours. The females are described as having their caps wrapt about their heads with cords, their head-dresses remarkably high, sometimes reaching three feet above their heads, in the shape of sugar-loaves, with streamers of silk hanging from them. Chaucer's "Parson" severely reprehends the extravagance of men's dress, which he describes in strong terms. He also remarks upon the "outrageous array of the women."

false law makers, God's law haters, finders of customs, destroyers of virtues, authors of sin. In this church are idolaters, heretics, enchanters, &c., and all those that believe that health may come of using God's word written, but only hanged on or carried about by man, or that so carried or borne about they are profitable to body or to soul.*

There are merchants, chapmen, victuallers, vintners, changers, buyers, sellers, who use deceit in weight, number, or measure. In this church are usurers, false jurors, and all false witness bearers, as the prophet saith, Ps. xv. In this church are pleaders, lawyers, sequestrators, commissaries, officials, summoners, all such of them as sell truth or sin to take money, as is said, Ps. xxvi. In this church are auditors, receivers, treasurers, procurators, judges, all such as accept persons without a cause.

This church, when it is beaten, it waxes the harder; when it is blamed, it waxes the duller; when it is taught, it is the more ignorant; when it is done well to, it is the more opposed. And it falls down and comes to nought, when in man's eyes it seems most strongly to stand. St. Augustine saith, that Christ's church pursues evil-livers, in charity, by way of amendment. But the fiend's church pursues Christ's church in malice, by way of slander and slaying. And thus Cain, that false, envious, accursed man, slew his brother Abel, that blessed, simple, innocent man. As the expositors say, Cain was the beginning of Babylon, and antichrist shall be the end. And Abel was the beginner of Jerusalem, and Christ shall be the ender. Ishmael persecuted Isaac, but Isaac did not so to Ishmael. Esau pursued his brother Jacob; but not so Jacob, by the counsel of his mother he fled into Mesopotamia from the wrath of his brother, till it was assuaged. Thus our mother, holy church, counsels her children to flee the malice of the fiend's church, till it be slaked, Matt. x. When the fiend's church shall pursue you in this city, flee ye to another. But this must be done with discretion, that we hurt not our brother's conscience. Christ pursued not the Jews, but the Jews pursued Jesus Christ. Heathen

* The use of written charms was very common in the days of popish darkness, and even now is prevalent among ignorant persons, far more than commonly is supposed. The faith still placed by many thousands in that blasphemous relic of popery, called the Saviour's Letter, which may often be seen placed on the walls of cottages, in the belief that it will protect from harm, is a painful instance of this. It is to be feared that there are many still in England who carry that, and other papers of a like description about them, believing that they shall thereby be kept from evil!

men slew the apostles, but the apostles slew not heathen men.

See now the frowardness of this world, that hath been from the beginning. When Isaiah, the holy prophet, prophesied and preached unto the people, they would not hear his words, nor suffer him to live. But people that rose after his death, read his books and said, If we had lived in his days, he should not have been put to death. And yet, they slew Jeremiah, who by the Spirit of God told things that were to come, and taught them the truth. His successors took his books, and read them in their temples, and bewailed him for a holy man, that he was so slain amongst them; but they slew Ezekiel and many others more! Then the Jews, such as were scribes and pharisees, made fair the tombs of these prophets, and said in hypocrisy, if they had been in their days, they should not have been slain. But they gave the counsel that Christ, who is the head of all saints, should be dead, with most despiteous death. The fiend's church in these days praise above the clouds Christ and his holy saints, with words and with signs; but they pursue to death the lovers of his law! And thus Christ saith in his gospel, Luke vi. Right as ye do now, so did your fathers to their prophets in their days. And therefore, wo to you, for Christ saith, In this world ye are rich, fat fed, laughing while pursuing others; weep ye, and make ye sorrow, for your pain shall be much in hell. Oh, these shall have a dreadful day when they are arraigned at the bar of judgment, when Christ shall rear up his cross, the banner of his sufferings!*

Of the day of judgment speaketh the prophet, Zeph. i. The great day of the Lord is nigh, and cometh fast, and wonders approach quickly; it shall not long tarry. In that day, he that is strong and mighty shall be troubled; for the voice of the Lord is bitter to the damned. That day is a

* This is one of the most affecting appeals in the writings of the reformers. To enter into the spirit and feelings of the writer, we must consider the situation of the followers of the truth in England at the commencement of the fourteenth century. The burning alive the followers of Wickliff was then just begun, and they were hunted out by the Romish prelates with much activity. In the genuine spirit of the gospel, the persecuted Lollard had recourse to scripture; he felt the identity of his case with that of God's people in all former times, and thence he found comfort and support. And we cannot but observe how completely their case has resembled that of those who went before. Are there not many now who profess to venerate the reformers, while in heart they differ from their views, and oppose to the utmost all who now hold the like doctrines?

day of wrath, a day of tribulation; that is a day of anger, of grief, of ruin, and of wretchedness. It is a day of darkness and of thick smoke, a day of clouds and of the raging whirlwind; it is a day of the trumpet and of hideous noise. For then they shall see their Judge above them, stirred to wrath. Then shall they see hell open beneath them, angels on their right side hastening them to hell, fiends on their left side drawing them to hell, saints approving God's doom, and all the world accusing; and then their own conscience open as a book, in which they shall read their own damnation! These wretches, beholding the great glory of those whom they despised in this world, then shall say, in the words of the wise man, (see the book of Wisdom v.) "These are they whom we sometime had in scorn and upbraiding; we foolish thought their life to be folly and madness, and we guessed their end should have been without honour. How now, for they are counted among the sons of God, and they take their lot among his saints? Therefore, we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness shone not to us: we are weary of the way of wickedness and damnation. What profit hath our pride done to us? or our great avaunt, or boast of riches? What hath it given to us? All those things are passed from us as the shadow!"

Then shall the Judge sternly say unto them, Matt. xxv. "Go away from me, ye accursed, into the fire of hell everlasting, which is ordained for the devil and his angels." Then may the soul say to the body these words, "Come, thou accursed carrion, come and go with me, for I am compelled to come again to thee, that we may go again to other shame, to take our reward, as we have deserved pain for evermore. That which we loved, now it is gone from us! and all that we hated is turned upon us! Now is our joy turned into sorrow, and our mirth into weeping. Now is our laughter turned into mourning, and all our pleasure into wailing. Nothing remaineth for us but fire, hot, burning horrors everlasting; fear intolerable, dread unspeakable, always discord without friendship, and full despair of any end!"

Strive in this life to leave the fiend's church, and to bring yourself, both body and soul, into the church of Jesus Christ while grace and mercy may be granted. Ask of Him who offered himself willingly upon the cross, to save us all when we were lost. For thus it is written of the words of God,

which he speaketh to a sinful soul. Turn thee again, turn thee again, thou sinful soul; turn thee again, turn thee again, that we may behold thee, Cant. vi. 13. For God knoweth thy misgovernance, and will not forsake thee, if thou wilt turn again. As he saith in the prophet Jeremiah, iii. Thou hast gone after many lovers, nevertheless turn thee to me, saith the Lord, and I shall receive thee, and take thee to grace. Upon this saith St. Gregory, "Herein God showeth how much he loveth us; for when we forsake him, he forsaketh not us." St. Augustine saith, "O man, mistrust thou not the mercy of God, for more is his mercy than thy wretchedness." And thus Abner said of king David, 2 Sam. iii. Ye that will have king David as a merciful lord to you, ye must bring with you this woman, Michal, if ye will see his gracious face. Here we consider David the king to bear the figure of Jesus Christ, and the name Michal, when it is declared,* means the water, or sorrow, of all. Let us think it thus to mean—Ye that desire in all your might, to find and to have the mercy of God, and to see his gracious face in bliss, ye must have the sorrow of true repentance from your heart, with full contrition of will, never to turn to sin. And if ye will to be true, and no more to break this covenant, God will not that ye be dead, but that ye have everlasting life.

AMEN, AMEN, SO MAY IT BE.

* Interpreted. Michal means, Who is complete? or, All is water.

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS

OF

WALTER HILTON.

WALTER HILTON was a Carthusian monk, of Sheen, in the county of Surry. He was also a doctor in divinity and canon of Thurgarton. He wrote many religious works, from which he appears to have been one of those who entered upon the monastic, or, as they termed it, the contemplative life, with a belief that they were thus best seeking the glory of God and the good of their own souls, and without relinquishing other duties.

His writings, like those of most who remained within the church of Rome, and yet held the doctrines of truth, present a painful mixture. He evidently looked to the only true foundation, even Jesus Christ, for salvation, and in pointing him out as an all-sufficient Saviour, upon whom alone we may trust, he is very clear, but upon this foundation he builds much wood, hay, and stubble, as well as much gold and precious stones. He was, however, free from the common superstitions and vanities of that period; and there is much in his writings which may be useful to the believer at all times. He appears to have been one of that class, who, in a later day, came forward and took a prominent part in the English Reformation; as such it is desirable to give a few specimens of his writings, and we cannot but be convinced that he must have suffered much from the doctrines and practices maintained around him. The first of the following extracts from his writings will show that he had no bigoted predilection for his own class, but considered that a christian might serve his Master faithfully in any station where he was lawfully placed. Had the monastic orders in general been formed of such characters, Wickliff would have spoken and written very differently of them. Such excellences, however, only render more painful the darkness by which they are surrounded; they should make us thankful for the clearer and more steady light of the reformation, and more active to work while that day is continued to us.

Hilton is said to have died in the year 1395; but Pits, apparently with greater probability, considers that he lived about 1433.

WALTER HILTON.

ON THE MIXED LIFE.

[In a treatise "Written to a devout man, of secular estate," Hilton thus advises his friend.] "I am of the mind that the life which I have termed to be mixed is best, and most befitting thee, and thou shouldest accordingly divide and dispose of thy time wisely, and to the satisfaction of the rule of charity. For know thou well, that if thou leave the necessary business or the active life belonging to thee, and art careless, and take no heed of thy worldly goods, as how they are kept and spent, nor lookest after those that pertain to thy charge, to see they do well, nor wilt afford thy help upon the necessity of thy christian brother, by reason of thy love, and the desire thou hast to apply thyself only to solitude and spiritual exercises, imagining that by so doing thou art excused and freed from thy aforesaid obligations—if, I say, thou dost so, thou dost not wisely nor profitably for thy soul; for what are thy works or exercises worth, be they spiritual or corporeal, unless they are done according to justice and reason, to the honour of God, and agreeable to his will? surely they are even nothing worth. Therefore, if thou leave or neglect that which thou art bound unto by the law of charity, justice, or other obligation, and wilt entirely give thee to another thing voluntarily taken on thee, under pretence of better pleasing and serving God, in a thing which thou art not bound unto, in so doing thou doest no discreet or acceptable service to him."

After some further remarks, he proceeds,

Thou "shouldest perform both these works and exercises, that is to say, the internal and external, at divers and several times, and with as good will the one as the other, so far as thou canst. As for example, if thou hast been at thy prayer and spiritual exercise, that finished, thou shalt go and busy thyself in some corporeal or external doing concerning thy christian brethren, and therein spend reasonable time with willingness and gladness of mind. And after that thou hast been busily employed for a time about thy servants, and other men with whom thou

shalt have occasions, and hast profitably spent with them so much time as shall be truly needful, then shalt thou break from these external doings, and shalt return again to thy prayers and devotions, which thou shalt perform according to the grace that God shall give thee for it; and so doing, thou, by the grace of our Lord, shalt put away and avoid sloth, laziness, idleness, and vain rest, which often creep in upon us through the deceitfulness of our nature, under pretence or colour of contemplation, or other spiritual recollections; whereby we come to omit the performance of good and meritorious external affairs and businesses, appertaining to us and our charge, by the appointment or providence of God. And thus thou shalt be always in some good exercise or other, internal or external, by turns and in their proper times." (ch. vi.)

But Hilton knew the danger of too great attention to the world, and in ch. xiv. he thus guards his friend against suffering the love of earthly things to engross his affections. "Many men are covetous of worldly goods, honours, and earthly riches, and think both in dreaming and waking, how, and by what means they may come thereto; and then they forget all care of their soul's good, and all thoughts of the pains of hell, or the joys of heaven. Surely these men are not wise; they are like children that run after butterflies, and because they look not to their feet they sometimes easily fall down, and break their legs. What is all the pomp, honours, riches, and jollity of this world but a butterfly? Surely it is no more, yea, it is much less. Therefore I pray thee be covetous of the joys of heaven, and thou shalt have honour and riches that shall last for ever."

He elsewhere observes, "It is less mastery to forsake worldly goods than to forsake the love of them; peradventure thou hast not forsaken thy covetousness, but only hast changed it from great things unto small; from a pound unto a penny, from a silver dish, to one of a halfpenny."

EXTRACTS FROM

THE SCALE (OR LADDER) OF PERFECTION.

BOOK II. PART III. CHAPTER VII.

How Divine Love, through gracious beholdings of Jesus, slayeth all stirrings of pride; and maketh the soul to lose the savour and delight in all earthly honours.

NEVERTHELESS, I shall tell thee more particularly how love killeth sins in a soul, and reformeth virtues. And first of PRIDE, and the virtue contrary thereto, namely HUMILITY. Thou must understand there are two kinds of humility. One is had by working of reason; another is felt by the special gift of love. Both are of love, but the former love worketh by, and with the reason of the soul, and the latter love worketh by itself. The first is imperfect, the other is perfect. The first a man feels from beholding his own sins and wretchedness, through the which beholding he thinks himself unworthy to have any gift of grace, or any reward of God, but thinks it enough that He would of his great mercy grant him forgiveness of his sins. And also he thinks himself, because of his sins, to be worse than the greatest sinner that lives, and that every man does better than he. And by such beholding he thrusts himself down in his thoughts under all men. And he is busy to withstand the stirrings of pride as much as he can, both bodily and spiritual pride, and despises himself so, that he assents not to the feelings of pride.

Perfect humility a soul feels from the sight and spiritual knowing of Jesus; for when the Holy Ghost lighteneth the reason to the sight of verity, how Jesus is all, and that he doth all, the soul has so great love, and so great joy in that spiritual sight, (for it is really so indeed,) that it forgets itself, and fully leans to Jesus with all the love that it has, to behold him. It takes no heed of any unworthiness of itself, nor of sins afore done, but sets itself at nought, with all the sins, and all the good deeds that ever it did, as if there were nothing but Jesus.

Also such a soul, in respect to his neighbour has no regard to him, nor judging of him, whether he is better or worse than himself; for he esteems himself and all other

men to be all alike, and to be just nought of themselves in regard of God, and this truly is so. For all the goodness that is wrought in himself or in others is only of God, whom he beholds as all in all. And therefore he sets all other creatures at nought, as he does himself. Thus humble was the prophet Isaiah, xl., when he said thus, All nations are before our Lord as if they were not, and are reputed as nothing, and as a vain thing. That is, in comparison of the endless being, and the unchangeable nature of God, mankind is as nought; for of nought was it made, and to nought shall it return, unless He keep it in its being who made it of nought. This is truth, and this should make a soul humble, if by grace it could see this truth.

Therefore, when once love openeth the inner eye of the soul, to see this truth, with other circumstances that attend it, then the soul begins to be really humble, for then, through the sight of God, it feels and sees itself as it is. And then does the soul forsake the beholding and leaning upon itself, and fully falls to the beholding of Jesus. And when it does so, then the soul sets nought by all the joy and worship of the world; for the joy of worldly worship is so little, and so nought, in regard of that joy and of that love which it feels in the spiritual sight of Jesus, and knowledge of the truth, that though it might have the worldly worship without any sin, he would have nothing to do with it. No, though men would worship him, praise him, and favour him, or set him in great state, it would nothing at all please him. No, though he had great skill in all the liberal sciences, and of all skill under the sun, or had power to work all manner of miracles, yet would the soul take no delight in all this, no more consider it a dainty, or of more savour, than to gnaw upon a dry stick! He had rather forget all this, and be alone, out of the sight of the world, than to think of them, and be worshipped of all men; for the heart of a true lover of Jesus is made so much, and so large, through a little sight of him, and a little feeling of his spiritual love, that all the liking, and all the joy of all the earth cannot suffice to fill a corner of it.

And then it well appears, that these wretched worldly lovers, who are as it were enraptured with the love of their own worship, and pursue after it to have it, with all the might and all the knowledge they have, they have no

taste of this humility, but are wondrous far from it. But the lover of Jesus has this humility lastingly, and that not with heaviness and striving for it, but with liking and gladness. This gladness he has, not because he forsakes the worship of the world, for that were a proud humility belonging to a hypocrite; but because he has a sight and a spiritual knowledge of the truth and worthiness of Jesus, through the gift of the Holy Ghost. That revering sight, and that lovely beholding of Jesus, comforts his love so wonderfully, and bears it up so mightily and with such ease, that it cannot like or fully rest in any earthly joy, nor would he if he could. He makes no matter whether men praise him or dispraise him, worship him or despise him; as to himself, he sets it not to heart, neither to be well pleased (for his greater humiliation) when men despise him, nor to be displeased when men worship (reverence) him or praise him. He had rather forget both the one and the other, and only think on Jesus, and get humility by that way. And that way is much the most secure, whosoever can attain to it. Thus David did when he said, My eyes are always to the Lord, for he shall pluck my feet out of the net. Ps. xxv. For when he doth so, then forsaketh he utterly himself, and casteth himself wholly under Jesus, and then is he in a secure guard; for the shield of truth which he holds, keeps him so well that he shall not be hurt through any stirring of pride, as long as he holds himself within the shield. As the prophet said, Verity shall compass thee with a shield, Ps. xci. And that is, if thou, leaving all other things, only beholdest him; for then shalt thou not dread for the night's dread; that is, thou shalt not fear the spirit of pride, whether he come by night or by day, as the next verse saith, From the arrow that fleeth by day. Pride cometh by night to assail a soul when it is despited and contemned of other men, that thereby it should fall into heaviness and sorrow. It cometh also as an arrow flying in the day, when a man is praised and worshipped of all men, whether it be for worldly doing or spiritual, that he should have vain joy in himself, and to rest therein, and false gladness in things that are passing. This is a sharp arrow, and a perilous, it flees swiftly and strikes softly; but it wounds deadly. But the lover of Jesus, who stably beholds him by devout prayers and busy thinking on him, is so lapped around with the safe shield of truth, that he dreads it not, for this arrow cannot enter

into his soul. Nay, though it come, it hurts him not; but glances away, and passes forth.

And thus is the soul made humble, as I understand, by the working of the Holy Ghost, that is the gift of love; for he openeth the eye of the soul to see and love Jesus, and he keepeth the soul in that sight restfully and securely. He slayeth all the stirrings of pride wonderfully, and privately, and softly, and the soul knoweth not how. And also he bringeth in by that way, verily and lovely, the virtue of humility. All this doth divine love, but not in all lovers fully alike; for some have this grace but short and little, as it were in the beginning of it, and a little assaying towards it, for the conscience is not cleansed fully through grace. And some have it more fully, for they have a clearer sight of Jesus, and they feel more of this love.

Book I.—Part III.—Chapter II.

Of the worthiness and excellency of the soul, and how it was lost, and how man may be saved by the passion of Christ, be he ever so wretched.

The soul of a man is a life consisting of three powers, memory, understanding, and will, after the image and likeness of the blessed Trinity; inasmuch as the memory was made strong and stedfast—to hold God in perpetual remembrance, without forgetting, or distraction, or the hinderance of any creature. The understanding was made bright and clear, without error or darkness, as perfectly as a soul in a body unglorified could have.—And the will and affections were made pure and clean, burning in love to God, without sensual love of the flesh, or of any creature. This was the dignity and worth of man's soul by nature, at his first creation, which thou hadst in Adam before the first sin. But when Adam sinned, choosing love and delight in himself and in the creatures, he lost all his excellency and dignity, and thou also in him.—For David saith in the Psalms, Man being in honour understood it not, and therefore he lost it, and became like a beast.

See then the wretchedness of thy soul; for as the memory was somewhat established and fixed upon God, so now it hath forgotten him, and seeketh its rest in the creatures; now in one creature, and then in another, and never

can find full rest, having lost Him in whom is full rest. And so it is with the understanding, and the will, and affections, both which were pure in spiritual savour and sweetness, but now it is turned into a foul lust and liking in itself, and in the creatures; both in the senses, as in gluttony and licentiousness; and in the imagination, as in pride, vain glory, and covetousness; insomuch that thou canst do no good deed but it is defiled with vain glory, nor canst thou easily make use of any of thy senses upon any thing that is pleasant, but thy heart will be taken and inflamed with a vain lust and liking of it, which putteth out the love of God from thy heart, so that no feeling of spiritual love or savour may come into it.

Every man that liveth in spirit understandeth well all this. This is the soul's wretchedness, and our mischief for the first man's sin, besides all other wretchedness and sins which thou hast wilfully added thereto. And know thou well that hadst thou never committed any other sin with thy body—but only this which is called original, (for that it is the first sin, and is nothing else but the losing of our righteousness which we were created in,) thou shouldest never have been saved, had not our Lord Jesus Christ by his precious passion delivered thee, and restored thee again.

And therefore, if thou think I have herein spoken too high, because thou canst neither understand it well, nor practise it accordingly as I have delivered, I will now descend to thee, and fall as low as thou canst desire, both for thy profit and my own. Then say thus; though thou art ever so much a wretch, and hast committed ever so great sins, do but forsake thyself, and all thy works done, both good and bad, and cry to God for mercy, and ask for salvation ONLY by virtue of Christ's precious passion, and that with a good trust, and without doubt thou shalt have it. And as for original sin, and all other, thou shalt be safe, yea, as safe as an anchoret that is inclosed.* And not only thou, but all christian souls that trust upon his passion, and humble themselves, acknowledging their wretchedness, asking mercy and forgiveness, and the fruit of this

* A rare admission to be made by a member of a monastic order. It shows how completely Hilton was free from those superstitions and errors which gave currency to the letters of fraternity in those days, whereby persons of rank were induced to pay large sums that their names might be enrolled in the monastic orders, believing that they should thereby secure their salvation.

precious passion only, and submitting themselves to the sacraments of holy church,* though they have been encumbered with sin all their life-time, and never had feeling of spiritual savour or sweetness, or spiritual knowledge of God, yet shall they in this faith and good will, by virtue of this precious passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, be safe, and come to the bliss of heaven.

All this thou knowest well, but yet it delights me to recite and speak of it, that thou mayest see the endless mercy of our Lord, how low he falls to thee, and to me, and to all sinful wretches. Ask mercy therefore, and have it. Thus saith the prophet in the person of our Lord, Every one that calleth upon the name of our Lord shall be saved, Joel ii. Rom. x. that is, every one that asketh salvation by Jesus and his passion.

This courtesy of our Lord some men understand aright, and are saved thereby. And others, in trust of this mercy and this courtesy, lie still in their sins, and think to have the benefit of it when they please, but they are mistaken, for they are taken before they are aware, and so damn themselves.

[In another place Hilton thus speaks of Christ giving peace to the soul, desiring his presence when he hath withdrawn for a season.]

Wonder not though the feelings of grace be sometimes withdrawn from a lover of Jesus; for holy writ saith the same of the spouse, that it fared thus with her, Cant. iii. I sought him, and I found him not; I called, and he answered not. That is, when I fall down to my frailty and sin, then grace withdraweth, for my falling is cause thereof, and not his flying, but then feel I pain of my wretchedness in his absence. And therefore I sought him by great desire of heart, and he gave to me not so much as a feeble answer. And then I cried with all my soul, "Turn again thou my beloved." And yet he seemed as if he heard me not. The painful feeling of myself, and the assailing of fleshly loves, and fears in this time, and the wanting of my spiritual strength is a continual crying of the soul to Jesus. And nevertheless, our Lord maketh strange, and cometh

* A touch of popery, which shows how difficult it is to become divested of such errors, even where the light of truth is clearly seen.

not, cry I ever so fast, for he is sure enough of his lover, that he will not turn again to worldly loves quite, he can have no savour in them, and therefore stayeth he the longer.

But at the last, when he pleaseth, he cometh again full of grace and faithfulness, and visiteth the soul that languisheth through desire, by sighings of love after his presence; and he toucheth it and anointeth it full softly with the oil of gladness, and maketh it suddenly whole from all pain. And then crieth the soul to Jesus in a spiritual voice, with a glad heart, thus, "Thy name is as oil poured out. Thy name is Jesus, that is, health." Then as long as I feel my soul sore and sick by reason of sin, pained with the heavy burden of my body, sorrowful and fearful for perils and wretchedness of this life, so long, Lord Jesus, thy name is oil shut up, not poured forth. But when I feel my soul suddenly touched with the light of thy grace, healed and cured from all the filth of sin, and comforted in love and in light with spiritual strength and gladness unspeakable, then can I say with strong, loving, and spiritual might to thee; "Thy name, O Jesus, is to me oil poured forth." For, by the effect of thy gracious visitation I feel well the true exposition of thy name, that thou art Jesus, health; for only thy gracious presence healeth me from sorrow and from sin. B. ii. Part 3. ch. xi.*

* Hilton elsewhere guards against the error of attributing beneficial effects to the mere use of the *name* Jesus, as it is employed in many Romish books of devotion. He says, "I mean not this word Jesus painted upon the wall, or written in letters on a book, or formed by lips in sound of mouth, or framed in thy mind by imagination; for in this wise a man that is void of charity may find him." B. i. P. 3. ch. iii. § 2.

He also guards against reliance upon mere feelings; "Bodily feelings, be they ever so comfortable, are not to be desired, nor regarded much if they come; but spiritual feelings should ever be desired; I mean the killing of all worldly love, the opening of the spiritual eye, purity of spirit, peace of conscience, and others spoken of before." B. ii. Part 3. ch. xi.

The Scale of Perfection was printed repeatedly between 1494 and 1672.

THE HISTORY

OF

REYNOLD PECOCK,

Bishop of Chichester,

AFFLICTED AND IMPRISONED FOR THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

A. D. 1457.

Fox, in his Acts and Monuments, states—In the time of archbishop Bourchier befell the troubles of Reynold Pecock, bishop of Chichester, afflicted by the pope's prelates for his faith and profession of the gospel. Hall in his Chronicle maketh mention of this bishop, declaring that an overthwart (too severe) judgment, as he terms it, was given. This man, saith he, began to move questions, not privately, but openly in the universities, concerning the annates, Peter-pence, and other jurisdictions and authorities pertaining to the see of Rome, and not only put forth the questions, but declared his mind and opinion in the same; wherefore he was for this cause compelled to abjure at Paul's cross. Of whom also recordeth the Polychronicon, but in few words. This bishop, first of St. Asaph, then of Chichester, so long as duke Humphrey lived, by whom he was promoted and much esteemed, was quiet and safe, and also bold to dispute and to write his mind, and wrote, as Leland records, divers books and treatises. But after that good duke was made away, this good man was open to his enemies, and matter was soon found against him. Whereupon, he being complained of, and accused by privy and malignant promoters unto the archbishop, letters first were directed down from the archbishop, dated October 22, A.D. 1457, to cite all men to appear that could say anything against him.

This citation being directed, the bishop upon the summons thereof was brought, or rather came before the judges

and bishops, unto Lambeth, where Thomas, the archbishop, with his doctors and lawyers, were gathered together in the archbishop's court. In which convention, also, the duke of Buckingham was present, accompanied with the bishops of Rochester and of Lincoln. What were the opinions and articles objected against him, after in his revocation shall be specified. In his answering for himself in such a company of the pope's friends, he could not prevail; notwithstanding, he, stoutly defending himself, declared many things worthy great commendation of learning, if learning against power could have prevailed.

But they, on the contrary part, with all labour and travail extended themselves, either to reduce him, or else to confound him. As here lacked no blustering words of terror and threatening, so also many fair flattering words and gentle persuasions were admired withal. There was no stone left unturned, no ways unproved, either by fair means to entreat him, or by terrible menaces to terrify his mind, till at length, he, being vanquished and overcome by the bishops, began to faint, and gave over. Whereupon a recantation was put unto him by the bishops, which he should declare before the people. The copy of which his recantation here follows.

In the name of God, Amen. Before you, the most reverend father in Christ and Lord, the lord Thomas, by the grace of God archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England, and legate of the apostolic see, I Reynold Pecock, unworthy bishop of Chichester, do purely, willingly, simply, and absolutely confess and acknowledge, that I in times past, that is to say, by the space of these twenty years last past and more, have otherwise conceived, holden, taught, and written, as touching the sacraments, and the articles of the faith, than the holy church of Rome, and universal church; and also that I have made, written, published, and set forth, many and divers pernicious doctrines, books, works, writings, heresies, contrary and against the true catholic and apostolic faith, containing in them errors contrary to the catholic faith, and especially these errors and heresies here under written.

1. First of all, that we are not bound by the necessity of faith, to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, after his death, descended into hell.

2. Also, that it is not necessary to salvation to believe in the holy catholic church.

3. Also, that it is not necessary to salvation to believe the communion of saints.

4. Also, that it is not necessary to salvation to affirm the body material in the sacrament.

5. Also, that the universal church may err in matters which pertain unto faith.

6. Also, that it is not necessary unto salvation to believe that which every general council universally ordains, approves, or determines, should necessarily for the help of our faith, and the salvation of our souls, be approved and held of all faithful christians.

Wherefore, I, Reynold Pecock, wretched sinner, who have long walked in darkness, and now by the merciful disposition and ordinance of God, am reduced and brought again unto the light and way of truth, and restored unto the unity of our holy mother the church, renounce and forsake all errors and heresies aforesaid.

Notwithstanding, godly reader, it is not to be believed that Pecock did so give over these opinions, howsoever the words of the recantation pretend. For it is a policy and play of the bishops, that when they do subdue or overcome any man, they carry him whither they list, as it were a young steer by the nose, and frame out his words for him beforehand, as it were for a parrot, that he should speak unto the people, not acording to his own will, but after their pleasure and fantasy. Neither is it to be doubted but that this bishop repented him afterward of his recantation; which may easily be judged hereby, because he was committed again to prison, and detained captive, where it is uncertain whether he was oppressed with privy and secret tyranny, and there obtained the crown of martyrdom, or no.

Bale states that Thomas Gascoign, writing of Reynold Pecock, makes declaration of his articles containing in them matters of sore heresy. First, saith he, Reynold Pecock at Paul's cross preached openly, that the office of a christian prelate, chiefly above all other things, is to preach the word of God. That man's reason is not to be preferred before the scriptures of the old and new testament. That the use of the sacraments, as they are now handled, is worse than the use of the law of nature. That bishops

who buy their admissions of the bishop of Rome do sin. That no man is bound to believe and obey the determination of the church of Rome. Also that the riches of bishops, by inheritance, are the goods of the poor. Also, that the apostles themselves personally were not the makers of the creed; and that in the same creed once was not the article, he went down to hell.* Also, that of the four senses of the scripture none is to be taken, but the very first and proper sense. Also, that he gave little estimation, in some points, to the authority of the old doctors. Also, that he condemned the wilful begging of the friars, as a thing idle and needless. Leland also saith, that he, not contented to follow the catholic sentence of the church, in interpreting of the scripture, did not think soundly, as he judged it, of the holy eucharist.

At length, for these and such other articles, the said Reynold Pecock was condemned for a heretic, by the archbishops and bishops of Rochester, Lincoln, and Winchester, with other divines more. Whereupon he, being driven to his recantation, was notwithstanding detained still in prison. Where some say, that he was privily made away by death.

Hall adds, that some say his opinions to be, that spiritual persons by God's law ought to have no temporal possessions. Others write, that he said that personal tithes were not due by God's law. But whatsoever the cause was, he was caused at Paul's cross to abjure, and all his books burnt, and he himself kept in confinement during his natural life.

Farther particulars respecting Bishop Pecock.

Lewis, in his life of Pecock, has stated many additional particulars respecting this persecuted bishop, some of which may be added to Fox's narrative.

Dr. Pecock was a native of Wales, the time of his birth was about A. D. 1390; he studied at Oriel college, Oxford. His association with Humphrey the "good" duke of Gloucester, shows that he was above the superstitions of the church of Rome, and not one of the common stamp of Romish ecclesiastics. In the year 1431, he was appointed master of Whittington college, in the city of London, and rector of the church of St. Michael Royal. About this time Pecock seems to have begun to study the controversy with the Lollards; we may easily suppose this led to what Leland

* It was added in the latter part of the fourth century.

points out as the first cause of his troubles, "that he was not careful enough in his interpretations of scripture to follow the approved opinion of the orthodox, but would make use of his own sense and judgments."

In 1444, Pecock was promoted to the bishopric of St. Asaph; three years after, he preached a sermon at Paul's cross, in which he advanced opinions respecting the preaching of bishops, which implied that it was their duty rather to be occupied in the general care of their dioceses, than in the work of preaching taken in its ordinary acceptation, or as he expresses himself, "in its most famous signification." Herein he certainly favoured the general practice of the Romish prelates rather than the doctrines of the Lollards, who objected much to unpreaching prelates. But we find that the bishops were very much displeased by this discourse, which makes it probable that Pecock had also opposed the style of preaching then commonly used by the friars, namely the setting forth idle romish legends, and tales of purgatory, to induce the people to make pecuniary contributions, and that he urged the importance of each bishop's overseeing the ministers in his charge, that they performed their duties in the cure of souls; or perhaps instead of stating that bishops ought not to preach, he urged that they ought not to preach in the manner then most common. It is difficult to ascertain what were Pecock's precise views, but it is probable that he wished to reconcile the Lollards or followers of the truth, to the church of Rome, by inducing a reformation of its chief malpractices and errors. A work which many others have laboured to effect, but it has always proved to be labouring in the fire for very vanity, Hab. ii. 13. In furtherance of these views, he published a book in 1449, called "The Repressing of over much blaming the Clergy." In the first part of this work, Dr. Pecock wrote against the errors of those, who, while opposing the errors of the church of Rome in asserting that scripture is insufficient for instruction, unless tradition be added, went into a contrary extreme. His views appear to have been very similar to those stated by the excellent and judicious Hooker,* but

* "Two opinions there are concerning the sufficiency of holy scripture, each extremely opposite unto the other, and both repugnant unto the truth. The schools of Rome teach scripture to be insufficient, as if, except traditions were added, it did not contain all revealed and supernatural truth, which absolutely is necessary for the children of men in this life to know, that they may in the next be saved. Others justly condemning this opinion, grow likewise unto a dangerous

he expressed them in a manner which would expose him to animadversions, not only from such as maintained either position in the extreme, but from those who had more correct knowledge of the truth. He defended some other popish errors which had been most warmly attacked by the followers of Wickliff, but did this in a manner unsatisfactory to the bigoted papists. About the same time Pecock was translated to the bishopric of Chichester.

Another work published by Dr. Pecock was entitled, "A Treatise of Faith." Here again he urges the Lollards to follow the determinations and holdings of the church in matters of faith, unless they could evidently and plainly show them to be untrue or insufficient, at the same time he disapproves of the principle that "the clergy, or the church of the clergy may not err in matter of faith," though he urges this as a possibility rather than admits that it was the case. Much of his argument is managed with the scholastic subtilties then prevalent. The second part of his treatise is on the rule of faith. In it he attacked the infallibility and supreme authority of the church, then strenuously maintained by the clergy. He says, "Faith is taken in two senses," first to signify the knowledge by which we know the true article; secondly, the same true article in itself known by faith. Or thus, "Faith is a knowing, wherein we consent in our understanding to a truth being above our capacity to find and know, and therefore we know it by this, that God affirmed it; and it is the article or the truth now in this said manner known. Now neither of these two faiths may the clergy, or the whole church, make new or at their own will." He showed that "holy writ is such a ground and foundation of our christian general faith, that there is no greater or better, or to us surer ground, or foundation to us for our christian general faith, than is written in holy writ." And that this writing, containing all our own faith, is precious, and ought not to be set little by, neither to be faintly and unworthily received. He made other important statements with respect to holy scripture. "Very often scripture expoundeth itself, inasmuch as by the reading of scripture in one part, a man shall learn which is the true understanding of scripture in

extremity, as if scripture did not only contain all things in that kind necessary, but all things simply, and in such sort, that to do any thing according to any other law, were not only unnecessary, but even opposite to salvation, unlawful and sinful." *Hooker, Ecc. Pol.* ii. § 8. *See Lewis's Life of Pecock.*

all other parts wherein he doubted or was ignorant before. Certain it may be, that one simple person, in fame, or in state, is wiser for to know, judge, and declare, what is the true sense of a certain portion of scripture, and what is the truth of some article, and that for his long studying, labouring, and advising thereupon, than is a great general council." So again, "The writing made and found by God, and by the apostles—may ground sufficiently the same faith in every clerk or layman, notably reasoned for to understand what he readeth in the new testament, though he learn not the same faith by any general council, or any multitude of clerks to be gathered together." But this work is especially to be noted for the testimony it contained against persecution. Objecting to the violent courses then pursued relative to the Lollards, he says, "The clergy shall be condemned at the last day, if they draw not men by clear knowledge into consent of true faith, instead of by fire, sword, or hanging." He however qualifies this by adding, "Although I will not deny these second means to be lawful, provided the former be first used." Bishop Pecock's reasonings, though for the most part short of scriptural truth, were sufficient to bring down the displeasure of the ecclesiastics; accordingly we find him opposed by several leading doctors. In 1457, he was expelled the house of lords, and forbidden the king's presence; his works were also submitted to examination. The political events of that period had deprived him of his most powerful supporters.

In the preceding account from Fox particulars are given of the result of this examination of bishop Pecock's writings. It is unnecessary to enter farther into the details, except to observe that there does not appear any ground for an accusation of his enemies, that he did not consider faith in the Holy Ghost necessary for salvation.* In summing up, or enforcing the charges, the archbishop did not make

* Lewis supposes that this calumny, for which there is not the least ground apparent in any writings of bishop Pecock's now extant, arose from his denying that belief in the holy catholic church was necessary to salvation; a position since admitted even by the council of Trent. His denial that it was necessary for salvation to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ descended into hell, because this article was not originally in the apostles' creed, but placed there in aftertimes by the ecclesiastics, seemed plainly to show that in bishop Pecock's opinion, the clergy, either in council or out of it, had no power to make articles of faith necessary to be believed for christian men's salvation. Like his successors among the reformers, he disputed against "unwritten verities," or the authority of human traditions.

any reference to this allegation. It was very usual for the Romish church to lay to the charge of those who differed from her, things that they knew not.

Bishop Pecock submitted to the church of Rome, and abjured the articles laid to his charge, as already has been mentioned. Many thousands crowded to witness his public penance. At the conclusion of this humiliating scene he is said to have publicly exclaimed, "My pride and presumption have brought these calamities and reproaches upon me." It is very possible that the bitter lessons he had learned in the school of adversity were blessed to his soul. The lowest abuse was now heaped upon him by the romish zealots, and poetic allusions made to him as a peacock despoiled of his plumage, and changed to an owl!

That his abjuration was forced, and not a willing compliance, there can be no doubt; this is confirmed by the continued persecution of his enemies, and especially from the manner in which those appointed to be his advisers spoke of him nearly a year afterwards.

He was now classed with those whom he had so lately opposed, and the following royal mandate to the university of Oxford, against the writings of Wickliff and Pecock, presents a useful lesson to some who in later days have stood aloof from humbler characters, while they held the same doctrines of truth, though perhaps expressed in different terms.

To our right trusty and entirely beloved chaplain, master Thomas Chandler, doctor of divinity, chancellor of our university of Oxford, and to the regents and non regents, and principals also of the colleges and halls of the same university.

Right trusty and entirely beloved, and trusty and well-beloved, we greet you well. And whereas we doubt not ye have well understood the great injuries and perils that the church and the clergy of England have now of late stood in, by the multiplying and copying of divers erroneous books and works, common to the hands of many mischievous and seditious persons of these our realms, intending almost the subversion of all police, sovereign power, and jurisdiction, as of the articles of our faith. For whose false and mali-

cious conspiracies and purposes to be withstood and repressed, we have and shall put ourself at all times in our uttermost devoir, not sparing to employ our own person in God's cause, as we know ourselves so bound to do. Therefore it is that we write unto you at this time, to the intent that our disposition should be known every where, namely, to you having guiding and governance of our university of Oxford, so that by your effectual support and abilities this new found venomous sect might be the rather suppressed and overthrown, to the honour of God, and exaltation of the true faith of his church. And forasmuch as we verily understand that there remain in divers places of our university many works and books compiled, as well by Reynold Pecock as by Wickliff, containing great and industrious errors and opinions, contrary to the faith, and the holy attestations of the universal church, by which works and books, not only minds are set in frowardness and malice, but also innocent and simple persons may be discouraged by study-taking upon the same books, as now of late it hath been evidently proved and known. We therefore desire and pray you, and not the less in the straitest wise would, and charge you, to command true, due, and whole searches for the said books of Pecock and Wickliff, and all other damnable works, whatsoever they be. So that like as the authors of the same have been by sufficient examination and authorities before these days reproved and condemned for their said damnable adjunctions and errors, likewise the same works may therefore be utterly foredoomed and put out of remembrance. Charging moreover that all the said works and books, when and as often as they are found, be wholly brought and conveyed to the hands of you our said chaplain and chancellor there. And the same, without dispensation or sparing any part of them, to be by you committed to the fire, in like manner and form as it hath been done touching the books of Pecock, at another season, yourself being chancellor of Oxford at the same time.

And, if ye find any person or persons, what estate, degree, or condition they be of, within our said university, refusing to obey and perform our commandment in this part, or concealing any of the said books or works, or in any wise hindering the said search to be made, ye proceed against them or him, to their or his most utter punishment, in example to others, certifying us and our council from time to time, of the names of the same. And that ye fail not

hereof as ye intend to do us right singular pleasure, and answer to us at your peril.

Given under our privy seal at Westminster, the 16th day of February.*

Sentence of deprivation was passed against Pecock, but he had sufficient interest to procure bulls from Rome, ordering his restoration to his diocese. They were objected to. Threats were held out of an embassy being sent to the pope, and that severe punishment should be inflicted upon him unless he renounced his see, while a competent pension was offered him if he would resign. It does not appear whether he complied with these terms, but from the treatment he afterwards experienced, we may suppose that he refused.

Another was promoted to his bishopric, while Pecock was sent to the abbey of Thorney, in an unhealthy part of Cambridgeshire. Instructions were given to the abbot, that Dr. Pecock should "have a secret closed chamber, and that he pass not out of the said chamber." One attendant was allotted him, but no one else was to see or speak to him without leave. The use of pens, ink, and paper were forbidden. His library was restricted to a mass book, a psalter, a legend, and a bible. His diet at first was to be the common allowance of the monks, but after some time might be slightly improved. For these charges, and the fitting up of his "closed chamber," an annual allowance of eleven pounds was ordered to be made to the abbot. Various accounts of his death have been given, but it is most probable that the strictness of such a confinement at his advanced age, soon terminated his days. He fell a sacrifice to the doctrine of the infallible authority of the clergy of the church of Rome. His fate is a proof that skill in the learning then esteemed, knowledge superior to his contemporaries, and even a desire to defend the unity of the outward church, did not avail, when the grosser absurdities of the romish faith and the usurpations of its clergy, were rejected, and their cruel proceedings disapproved.

* There is another letter from the king to the chancellor, dated April 17th, thanking the university for its ready and speedy execution of the order in the preceding letter, so that all such books as could be found within the university, erroneous, and contrary to the christian faith, had been condemned and burned. Harpsfield, in the reign of queen Mary, expressly speaks of Pecock as entangled in the opinions of Wickliff. These letters are among the MSS. in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. These proceedings took place in the early part of the reign of Edward IV.

Lewis concludes his life of Pecock with the following prayer, composed by the bishop, in English. "O thou Lord Jesu, God and man, Head of thy christian church, and teacher of christian belief, I beseech thy mercy, thy pity, and thy charity, far be this peril (implicit faith) from the christian church, and from each person therein contained. And shield thou that this venom never be brought into thy church, and if thou suffer it any while to be brought in, I beseech thee that it be soon cast out; but suffer thou, ordain, and do, that the law and the faith which thy church at any time keepeth, be received and admitted to fall under examination, whether it be the same true faith which thou and thine apostles taught, or no, and whether it hath sufficient evidences, that it is true faith or not."*

* Some additional light may be thrown upon the displeasure of the papists at bishop Pecock's opposition to their interpretation of the clause in the creed respecting Christ's descent into hell, by the following memorandum respecting one of the pieces of puppet-show machinery exhibited by the priests in England at that period.

"Item, That master Canning hath delivered this 4th day of July, in the year of our Lord 1470, to master Nicholas Peters, vicar of St. Mary Redcliffe, (Bristol,) Moses Conterin, (and) Philip Bartholomew, procurators of St. Mary Redcliffe aforesaid; *a new sepulchre* well gilt with gold, and a cover thereto.

"Item, An image of God Almighty rising out of the same sepulchre, with all the ordinance that belongeth thereto, that is to say, a lath made of timber, and the iron work thereof.

"Item, thereto belongeth heaven made of timber and stained cloths.

"Item, hell, made of timber, and iron work thereto, with devils to the number of thirteen.

"Item, four knights armed, keeping the sepulchre, with their weapons in their hands, that is to say, two axes and two spears, with two pavés, (large shields.)

"Item, four pair of angels' wings for four angels, made of timber and well painted.

"Item, the Father, the crown, and visage; the ball with a cross upon it, well gilt with fine gold.

"Item, the Holy Ghost coming out of heaven into the sepulchre.

"Item, belongeth to the four angels, four chevelers (or supports—the angels would be personified by four boys or young females)." *Harrington's Nugæ Antiquæ, by Park.*

It is painful to advert to such blasphemous representations, but we cannot otherwise have a just idea of the spiritual darkness which then prevailed, and the difficulties the reformers had to contend against. Even at the present day, where popery prevails, such representations are general, and to such proceedings the principles of Romanism must lead.

THE

LOLLARDS OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

PERSECUTED A. D. 1521.

We have seen the extent to which the doctrines of the truth, as taught by Wickliff and his followers, prevailed in England; also that the efforts of the papists were successful in again spreading thick darkness over the people, and preventing the free circulation of the scriptures. But there is sufficient evidence that during the century and a half which elapsed between the death of Wickliff and the more general reformation in the reign of Henry the eighth, there were many thousands who feared the Lord in secret, and who in their hearts bowed not down to the Baal of Romish superstition. This is manifest from numerous particulars recorded in the bishops' registers respecting the martyrs and confessors for the faith; many extracts from which are given by Fox and Wilkins. To recapitulate the details respecting these martyrs, and their sufferings, would be foreign to the design of the present work; but some account of the persecutions in Buckinghamshire, in the early part of the sixteenth century, may be here given, as they exhibit an important link in the history of the Reformation. We do not possess original writings of Lollards in the latter part of the fifteenth century, or the commencement of the sixteenth, but these records incontestably prove that the lessons of truth taught by Wickliff, had taken deep root in England, and continued to be studied, before the doctrines of the German reformers were known in our country. The streams which had risen from different sources, then united and swelled into a mighty river which made glad the city of our God.

Numerous affecting narratives are recorded on indisputable authority. The atrocious scene exhibited at Amersham in 1506, when the daughter of William Tylsworth, a married woman, named Clerk, was compelled to set fire to the fagots which consumed her father alive, while her husband, and sixty

others, stood by doing penance*—the burning of six men and a woman in one fire at Coventry, for teaching their children the Lord's prayer and the ten commandments in English†—the burning of John Brown, in Kent, near his own house, after his feet had been broiled on hot coals by archbishop Warham and bishop Fisher, till the flesh was consumed to the bone, for a shrewd question put to a priest who pretended to deliver souls from purgatory—the secret murder of Hunn in the Lollard's tower at St. Paul's cathedral, whose sole offence was refusing to pay a fee unlawfully demanded by a Romish priest—all these, and many more, plainly show the extent to which persecution then proceeded, the causes for which it was inflicted, and the atrocious cruelties by which it was accompanied.

The activity of the secret teachers of truth, and the extent of their labours, are shown by many of these details, and may be farther illustrated by the accusations against Thomas Mann. He was apprehended in 1511, and accused of denying several popish errors. Having submitted to the judgment of the Romish church, he was imprisoned in the abbeys of Osney and Frideswide at Oxford, from whence he escaped, and abode chiefly in Essex and Suffolk till 1518, when he was again apprehended, and brought before Fitzjames, bishop of London. The twelfth article alleged against him states, " That since the time of his abjuration, he had said that he and his wife had turned *six or seven hundred* people unto those opinions which he was abjured of." He was burned in Smithfield, March 29, 1518. The particulars of the accusations against him and others also show that Wickliff's tracts, his translation of the scripture, with other similar works, were efficient means of usefulness in that day.

We may now proceed to the record of English professors of the truth above referred to; the reader will find that these poor sufferers were almost all convicted, if such a term may be so applied, on the extorted testimony of their fellows. A

* Fox narrating this event in 1562, says, " that to stop the mouth of all carping cavillers with as much possibility as I may, be it known to all such persons who by evidence of truth and witnesses will be satisfied, that in the town of Amersham are *yet alive*, both men and women, who can and do witness of the same." Two of them, William Page and Agnes Witherley, he mentions by name. The spot where this deed of horror was perpetrated is still pointed out.

† For the truth of this Fox refers to a woman named Hall, living at Bagington, when his work was printed. All the principal narratives of Fox are fully authenticated, and his authorities mentioned.

more striking exemplification that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household," Matt. x. 36. is not recorded in the pages of history.

We find sons and fathers, daughters and mothers, brothers, sisters, masters, and servants, all accusing each other; the bonds of society, and the common ties of nature, were violently rent asunder by the inquisitorial severities of the Romish prelates. The particulars are here given in a condensed form, from the Acts and Monuments of John Fox; who entitles this painful narrative,

A Table describing the grievous affliction of good men and women, in the diocese of Lincoln, under John Longland, their bishop, with the names both of the accusers, and of them that were accused; also with the crimes to them objected; out of the Registers of the said diocese. Anno 1521.

Robert Bartlet, and Richard his brother, were detected by several of their former associates, to be known men, that is, to be of the same company and affinity with others, that had been abjured before, in the time of William Smith, bishop of Lincoln, about the year 1508. And that in the house of Thomas Harding, they were so noted by the words of Harding's wife; who speaking to Robert Bartlet, said that she was glad that he was converted to grace, and chosen to almighty God, requiring him never to forsake that which he was called to, for if he did, there was no sacrifice left for him. Also the said Harding's wife, speaking to Richard Bartlet, coming into her house, said, Here cometh a good man, and I hope he will be a good man, but he hath so much mind of buying and selling and taking of farms, that it putteth his mind from all goodness. By which words it appeared, said they, that he was a known man. Also, that Robert Bartlet, speaking to Harding's wife, said, he had thought to have called William Tylsworth false heretic; but now he was better advised. Also, that they used the lectures and readings of that company.

This Robert Bartlet, and Richard his brother, first being sworn, and yet confessing nothing before the bishop, at last were convicted by witnesses, and noted therefore of perjury. Wherefore incurring greater danger, they were constrained at their next examination to confess what they had both done and said. That is, that the said Robert

had read unto Richard his brother, a parcel of scripture beginning thus, James the servant of God, to the twelve kinds, &c. Also, for that he heard William Tylsworth say, that images of saints were but stocks and stones, and dead things; and that he taught the same to his brother Richard, and concealed the words of William Tylsworth. Also, for that he partly believed Thomas Mastal, teaching him that the true presence of Christ was not in the sacrament: and likewise of images and pilgrimage. Also, for receiving the communion at Easter without shrift, or previous confession to the priest.

Robert Bartlet was brought to examination, and caused by his oath to detect Richard Bartlet, his brother, because he said, his brother Richard had been much conversant with Thurstan Littlepage, and had learned of him the counsels and secrets of those men. Also, that he had learned of him some of the epistle of St. James.

The cause wherein Robert Bartlet detected Isabel his wife was, that when the bishop's servant was come for her husband, she uttered these words, saying, Alas, he was now an undone man, and she but a dead woman. Furthermore, the said Robert, being demanded of the bishop whether he knew Isabel his wife to be of the sect of heretics before he married her, said, Yea. Being asked again, if she had not been of that sect, whether then he would have married her, he granted the same likewise. The said Robert Bartlet detected also his own sister, in that he had twice instructed her not to worship images, and also had taught her in the epistle of St. James.

The aforesaid Robert Bartlet was brought to examination, and caused by his oath to detect Elizabeth Deane, Emme Tylsworth, William Grinder and his wife, John Scrivener, Alexander Mastal, William Tylsworth, Thurstan Littlepage, and John Bartlet his brother, these to be of the number of known men; for that they resorted many times together, reading and conferring among themselves, and talking against worshipping of images, and pilgrimage. And if any came in amongst them, who was not of their side, then they would say no more, but all keep silence, &c.

Richard Bartlet by his oath was constrained to detect Agnes Wellis, his sister, in three points.

First, for learning the epistle of St. James in English of Thurstan Littlepage. Secondly, for not believing the bodily presence in the sacrament. Thirdly, for speaking

against worshipping of images, and going on pilgrimages. This Richard Bartlet also in his confession, said of his father, that he was a better man than he was taken for. For the other day there came a man to him, as he was threshing, and said, God speed father Bartlet, ye work sore. Yea, said he, I thresh God almighty out of the straw!*

Against this Agnes Wellis brought and examined before the bishop, were ministered interrogatories, some of which were as follows:—

Whether she knew any other to be suspected of the same heresy or sect, beside them of Amersham so convented; who they were, and how many? Whether she had been, or is now noted, had, holden, or reputed, or defamed, to be of the same sect with Thurstan Littlepage, or others convicted of heresy, and whether she be, or hath been nominated for a known woman among them? Whether Thurstan Littlepage did ever teach her the epistle of St. James, or the epistles of St. Peter or Paul in English? and whether she had repeated oft times the epistle of St. James, unto the said Thurstan, in the presence of Richard Bartlet, her brother? Whether she had been instructed by Thurstan Littlepage, or by any other, in the aforesaid sect, that in the sacrament of the altar was not the true body of Christ, but only the substance of bread? Whether she had been instructed by Thurstan Littlepage, or any other, that pilgrimage was not to be used, nor the images of saints to be adored? Whether that Robert or Richard Bartlet, her brother, did ever teach her the epistle of St. James; and if he did, how often, and where? Whether she knew such a law and custom among them, that such as were of that sort, did contract matrimony only with themselves, and not with other christians? Whether she did ever hear Thurstan, or any other, say, that they only which were of their doctrine, were true christians? When she came to receive, and was confessed, whether she did utter and confess her heresies to the priest? Unto these, and other captious and cruel interrogatory articles, ministered against Agnes Wellis, she answered negatively almost to them all; refusing to utter any person unto the bishop. But soon after, being otherwise schooled, I cannot tell how, by the (Roman) catholics, she was compelled to detect both herself, her brother Robert Bartlet, Thurstan Littlepage, and also Isabel Morwin.

* Alluding to the Romish transubstantiation of the breaden cake.

The crime laid to Alice Harding was this, when the priest was coming to Richard Bennet, to give him housel she went before, and instructed him what he should do.

Roger Bennet, by like compulsion of his oath, was caused to detect John Jennings and two others for carrying about certain books in English; also W. Smith, wheeler, the wife of J. Milsent, the wife of W. Rogers, R. Stampe and his wife, the wife of R. Bartlet. These good women were detected to the bishop, for that upon the holy days, when they go and come from the church, they use to resort unto one J. Colingworth's house, and there to keep their conventicle.

Agnes Frank. Because she turned away her face from the cross, as it was carried about on Easter day in the morning, at the resurrection.

T. Rowland put to his oath, did detect John Scrivener the elder, for carrying about books from one to another.

James Morden, compelled in like manner by his oath, did detect Thomas Rowland for these words following: "If I lie, curse, storm, swear, chide, fight, or threat, then am I worthy for to be beat. I pray you, good master mine, if I offend in any of these nine, amend me with a good scourging." Also T. Chase, because he heard him twice recite the epistle of St. James. Also these words, "It was by the days of Herod, king of Jews, that there was a priest, Zachary by name, and he came of the sort of Abias, and his wife of the daughter of Aaron: both they were just before God, going in all the commandments," &c.

And Agnes Ashford, of Chesham, for teaching this James Morden the words following: "We be the salt of the earth; if it be putrified and vanished away, it is nothing worth. A city set upon a hill may not be hid. Light ye not a candle and put it under a bushel, but set it on a candlestick, that it may give a light to all in the house. So shine your light before men, as they may see your works, and glorify the Father, that is in heaven. No tittle or letter of the law shall pass over till all things be done." And five times went he to the foresaid Agnes to learn this lesson. Also, that the said Agnes did teach him to say this lesson: "Jesus seeing his people as he went up to a hill, was set, and his disciples came to him: he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed be the poor men in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Blessed be mild men, for

they shall weld* the earth." And twice he came to her to learn this lesson.

And these lessons the said Agnes was bid to recite before six bishops, who straitly enjoined and commanded her that she should teach those lessons no more to any man, and especially not to her children.

The aforesaid James Morden detected, among others, Agnes Ashford, and Thomas Chase; because these two did exhort him thrice, that he should keep the things they spake of, as secret as a man would keep a thief in prison.

Also Robert Pope, John Morden and his wife; because they were heard in the presence of this James Morden, their nephew, to recite the ten commandments in their house, in English.

Also Alice Atkins. Because of him she learned the paternoster, ave maria, and creed, in English, and the five marvels of St. Augustine. Also another piece of an English book beginning, "Here followeth four things, by which a man may know whether he shall be saved," &c.

And Marian Morden, his own sister, that she did not worship images. And after these things he intended to teach her of the sacrament.

To this James Morden, with other more abjurers, it was before enjoined by bishop Smith, for seven years, to visit the church of Lincoln twice a year from Amersham. And when divers had got license of the bishop, because of the length of the journey, to visit the image of our lady of Missenden, for the space of five years; this James Morden, when he could not obtain license so to do, yet notwithstanding, for the tediousness of the way, went with them to the same image, and thereupon was charged for violating the bishop's injunction. Also because to get his living, he wrought half a year out of the diocese, when he had been enjoined by the bishop not to go out of the county of Buckingham. This James Morden confessed that he used his paternoster and creed so much in English, that he had forgot many words thereof in Latin, and therefore was enjoined by bishop Smith to say it no more in English, but only in Latin, and because he kept not this injunction, he fell therefore in relapse.

Roger Benet, by compulsion of his oath, was caused to detect twenty-one to be known persons.

* Govern.

Thomas Halfeaker, sworn upon his oath, detected John Milsent and his wife, Roger Harding and his wife, T. Bernard, T. Africke and his wife, W. Rogers, W. Harding and his wife, K. Bartlet the mother of Robert and Richard Bartlet, T. Harding and his wife, W. Franke and his wife. Because they coming to the church, and especially at the elevation time, would say no prayers, but did sit mummy, as he termed it, like beasts. Because Katharine Bartlet, being of good health, came but seldom to the church, but feigned herself sick; and because William Franke married Agnes his wife, she being before abjured.

Thomas Holmes detected seventy-four persons, some of them living at Uxbridge, Hertford, and London. Among them Robert Pope, because he fled away when the great abjuration was at Amersham, A. D. 1511. Also for having certain English books.

Also Henry Miller, who was counted for a great heretic, and learned in the scripture.

Andrew Randall and his wife, of Rickmansworth. Because they received into their house, Thomas Man, flying from persecution, and for reading Wickliff's Wicket.

Benet Ward was also denounced by John Merston, for saying that it booteth no man to pray to our lady, nor to any saint, nor angel in heaven, but to God only, for they have no power of man's soul. Also the wife of Benet Ward and her daughter, for saying that Thomas Pope was the devoutest man that ever came in their house; for he would sit reading in his book even to midnight many times. John Butler, carpenter, R. Butler, W. King, of Uxbridge. These three sat up all the night in the house of Durdant of Ivercourt, by Staines, reading all the night in a book of scripture. John Muckliff, weaver, for speaking against holy bread and holy water. Thomas Man, for saying that Christ was not substantially in the sacrament. Thomas Stilman, for receiving an English book given him by Carder, his father, who after his abjuration before bishop Smith, fell sick and died.

Robert Carder, of Iver, weaver, detected Joan Cocks for desiring of Durdant, her master, that he being a known man, would teach her some knowledge of God's law, and desiring the same also of the Butlers.

Nicolas Durdant of Staines, Davy Durdant of Ankerwike; the wife of old Durdant, and the wife of Nicholas Durdant. These were detected for that old Durdant of Ivercourt,

sitting at dinner with his children and their wives, having bid a boy there standing to depart out of the house, that he should not hear and tell, did recite certain places unto them, out of the epistle of St. Paul, and of the gospels.

R. White was detected to be a known man, because, after the death of bishop Smith, he was heard to say these words, "My lord that is dead, was a good man, and divers known men were called before him, and he sent them home again, bidding them that they should live among their neighbours as good christian men should do. And now, said he, there is a new bishop who is called a blessed man, and if he be as he is named, he will not trouble the servants of God, but will let them be in quiet."

Marian Morden was forced upon her oath to accuse James Morden her own brother, who taught her the paternoster, ave, and creed in English, and that she should not go on pilgrimage, nor should worship saints or images; which she had not done by the space of six years past, following and believing her brother.

James Morden was forced upon his oath to accuse his two brothers, their wives, and eight others.

T. Coupland, forced by his oath, detected Roger Harding, and W. Grinder. Because these two could not say their creed in Latin.

T. Rowland, T. Coupland, R. Stevens, R. Bennet, were forced by their oath to accuse Thomas Harding of Amersham, and Alice Harding his wife. Because, after their abjuration in bishop Smith's time, divers known men, as they then termed them, who were abjured before, had much resort to their house. Also Agnes Squire, for speaking these words: "Men do say I was abjured for heresy, but I will never be ashamed of it."

John Sawcote upon his oath did appeach the vicar of Little Missenden for that he gave to Dr. Wilcocks twenty pounds, to excuse him that he might not be brought to open penance. And R. Sanders of Amersham, because, he ever defended them which were suspected to be known men. Also because he bought out his penance, and carried his badge in his purse.

Bishop Longland seeking how to convict John Phip of perjury, who being charged with an oath did not answer affirmatively to such suspicions as were laid unto him by Thomas Holmes and other accusers, examined Sybil Africke his own sister, upon her oath, to detect her brother of

relapse. But she so answered, that the bishop could take by her no great hold of relapse against him. Wherein is to be noted the singular iniquity and abuse in the church of Rome, which by virtue of oath, setteth the sister to procure the brother's blood. The like also was sought from Thomas Africke, his sister's husband; but they had by him no advantage.

Jenkin Butler appeached John Butler, his own brother, for reading to him in a certain book of the scripture, and persuading him to hearken to the same; also Richard Butler his brother, and others called Richard Nash, and Richard Tredway.

W. Ameriden detected Isabel Tracher, because she came not to the church often on the work days, being admonished both by the church-wardens, by the graduates of the church, and by Dr. Cock's commissary, but followed her business at home. Also because she purposed to set her daughter to Alice Harding, saying that she could better instruct her than many others. Also because she cursed the priest after he was gone, who had given to her the eucharist, saying, that he had given to her bitter gall. Also Alice Holting, for that she did dine before she went to church to take the sacrament, saying, that Isabel Tracher did so tell her, that she might dine before she received the sacrament.

Joan Norman appeached W. Trecher of Amersham for keeping Thomas Grove in his house on Easter and Christmas day, because he would not come to the church. Also R. Cosin, T. Man, and Alice Harding for dissuading from pilgrimage, from worshipping of images, and from vowing her money to saints for the health of her child. Also for saying, that she needed not to confess to a priest; but it would be enough to lift up her hands to heaven. Also for saying, that she might as well drink upon the Sunday, before mass, as any other day, &c.

John Scrivener was forced by his oath to accuse Henry Miller, wire drawer, who fled from Amersham to Chelmsford. That he abjured and did penance in Kent before, and afterward coming to Amersham, taught them many heresies. Also John Barret, goldsmith of London, Joan Barret his wife, and Joan his servant, because he was heard in his own house before his wife and maid, there present, to recite the epistle of St. James; which epistle, with many other things, he had perfectly without book.

And John Merywether, his wife, and his son, because

Joan his wife had lent to this John Scrivener, the gospel of Matthew and Mark, which book he gave to bishop Smith.

And Durdant by Stains, old Durdant, Isabel, wife of T. Harding, Hartop of Windsor, Joan Barret, wife of John Barret of London, Henry Miller, and Stilman Taylor. All these were accused, because at the marriage of Durdant's daughter they assembled together in a barn, and heard a certain epistle of St. Paul read, which reading they well liked, but especially Durdant, and commended the same.

Thomas Grove of London, butcher, William Glasbroke of Harrow on the hill, Christopher Glasbroke of London, W. Tylsworth of London, goldsmith, prentice to John Barret. These were appeached because they used to resort and confer together of matters of religion, in the house of Thomas Man of Amersham, before the great abjuration, which was ten years past.

John Newman was appeached because he was present in the house of J. Barret, at the reading of scripture.

Wily was appeached because he taught the gospel of Matthew to J. Wood and W. Wood after the great abjuration; and father Robert did teach them St. Paul's epistle; which old father was after that burned at Buckingham.

W. Littlepage, forced by his oath, accused Thurstan Littlepage, and Emma his wife. This Thurstan had taught him the saying of Solomon, that wrath raiseth chidings, had taught him also the paternoster and ave, in English. His creed in English he learned of his grandmother. Thurstan also taught him, Christ was not corporeally in the sacrament. He also accused John Littlepage his brother, because he was said to have learned the ten commandments in English of Alice Thurstan's wife, in his father's house. And John Frier, because he taught the said William the ten commandments in English.

John Gardiner appeached Joan Clark of Little Missenden, for saying she never did believe in the sacrament of the altar, nor ever would believe it.

His sister Agnes Ward, because, that when this Gardiner said, God help us and our lady, and all the saints of heaven, then she said, What need is it to go to the feet, when we may go to the head? He also accused sixteen others.

Bishop Longland seeking matter against Isabel Morwin, of whom he could take no great advantage by examination, called Elizabeth Copland, her own sister, and caused her to testify against her as follows. First, because in talk

together, coming from their father, being at the point of death, Isabel said to her sister Elizabeth, that all which die pass either to hell or heaven. Nay, said the other, there is between them purgatory.

Again, when Elizabeth came from the rood of rest, Isabel said, that if she knew so much as she hath heard, she would go no more on pilgrimage while she lived. For all saints, said she, are in heaven. Then Elizabeth asked, wherefore pilgrimage was ordained of doctors and priests. Said the other, For gain and profit. Who hath taught you this, quoth Elizabeth? man or woman? Your curate, I dare say, never taught you so. My curate, said she, will never know so much; and moreover she said to Elizabeth her sister, that if she would keep counsel, and not tell her husband, she would say more. And when Elizabeth answered, that she would not tell. But, saith the other, I will have you to swear, and because she would not swear, the other would not proceed any further.

Alice Brown was forced by her oath to detect John Tracher of Chesham, for that he taught her in the gospel this saying of Jesus, Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it. Also, because he taught her the eight beatitudes in English.

Emma Tylsworth, because she refused to detect others by virtue of her oath, and denied such matter as by witness and by the bishops' acts were proved against her; in pain of relapse the bishop enjoined her to make certain fagots of cloth, and to wear the same, both before her upper garment, and behind, so long as she lived.

W. Phipps was forced by his oath to detect Thomas Africke, for asking how his cousin Widmore Clark the elder, and John Phip did, at Hichenden; whether they kept the laws of God as they were wont?

Also John Phip for saying that images are not to be worshipped, because they are made and carved with man's hand, and that such ought not to be worshipped.

And John Gardiner, for that he said, that all who are burned for this sect, are true martyrs.

John Butler by his oath was forced to detect Thomas Geffrey, first of Uxbridge, then of Ipswich, tailor, for reading and teaching him in the acts and preachings of the apostles. Also for having a scripture book in English, which book the said Geffrey gave to the bishop of London when he was accused. Also that the said Geffrey said,

that true pilgrimage was, barefoot to go and visit the poor, weak, and sick, for they are the true images of God. And Richard Vulford, because he told the said John Butler, that the consecrated host was not the very true body of Christ. In proof whereof, they said, Let a mouse be put in the pix with the host, and the mouse would eat it up. And for more proof, they declared unto the said John Butler, that there were two priests in Essex, who put a mouse in the pix to a consecrated host, and the mouse did eat it. The deed of these priests being known and brought to the bishop, one of the priests was burned for the same.

John Butler also did detect John Clark of Denham. Vulford and Geffrey told him and John Clark, that holy bread and holy water were but a vain glory of the world, for God never made them, but they were men's inventions.

Moreover, that Thomas Geffrey caused this John Butler divers Sundays to go to London to hear Dr. Colet.*

He detected Andrew Fuller of Uxbridge, because he had an old book of Richard Vulford. Also another great book of Andrew Fuller, for which he paid six shillings and fourpence, and another little book of Thomas Man, which he brought to the bishop.

Thomas Man was appeached, because he read to this John Butler ten years before, how Adam and Eve were expelled out of Paradise, and for speaking against pilgrimage and worshipping of images, and against the singing service used then in churches. This Thomas Man was burnt, and died a martyr three years before.

Thomas Carder was accused that he brought this John Butler to Durdant's house at Ivercourt by Stains, where was Richard Butler his brother, and William King reading in a certain English book. At which time Durdant desired them, not to tell that he had any such English book in his house, lest he should be burned for the same. Also another time, John Butler with Richard Butler his brother, and Robert Carder, went to the house of Richard Ashford or Nash, to hear him read in a certain little book, which contained many good things.

Richard Vulman of London was detected, that he would have read to this John Butler a certain English book, and spake against pilgrimage and images.

John Phip was compelled by his oath to detect Radulph

* The founder of St. Paul's school, a learned and excellent man, who narrowly escaped being proceeded against as a heretic. See page 15.

Carpenter of London, for having certain books of the Apocalypse in English. Also for that this Carpenter and his wife brought him and the wife of Henry Ulman to a corner house of Friday-street, where the good man of the house, having a stump foot, had divers such books, to the intent they should hear them read.

Also the wife of Robert Pope, for having certain books in English, one bound in boards, and three with parchment coverings, with four other sheets of paper written in English, containing matter against Romish religion. Also another book of the service of the virgin Mary in English.

Thomas Tredway detected John Morden of Ashly Green, and Richard Ashford his brother, because John Morden had in his house a book of the gospels, and other chapters in English, and read three or four times in the same. In which book his brother Ashford also read once. Also because John Morden spake against images, and spake these words, Our Lord Jesus Christ saith in his gospel, Blessed be they that hear the word of God, and keep it, &c. Thomas Tredway also detected his mother for teaching him that he should not worship the images of saints.

Likewise Joan Bernard being accused by Robert Copeland, was sworn by her oath to detect Thomas Bernard, her own natural father, for speaking against pilgrimage, against worshipping of saints, and against dirges and praying for the dead, and for warning his daughter not to utter any of all this to her ghostly father or priest.

The like oath also was forced to Richard Bernard, that he should in like manner detect Thomas Bernard his own natural father, for teaching him not to worship images, nor to believe in the sacrament of the altar, but in God only which is in heaven, and that he should not utter the same to the priest.

Agnes Carder detected Richard Carder her husband, for saying, that if the bishop should call him, he would confess nothing although he burned him. And for saying that he suspected that she was too familiar with the vicar of Iver. And when she answered again, How could he be evil with her, seeing he saith mass every day, and doth not confess himself before; then her husband said, that he could confess himself to a post or to the altar. Where note, that the bishop then examining her of that offence, whether she was culpable, and whether she was commonly in the voice of the people diffamed with him or no; she confessed so to be.

Whereupon no other penalty nor penance for that crime of adultery was enjoined her of the bishop, but only this, that she should frequent the vicar's house no more!

John Clark of Denham was forced by his oath to detect Richard Vulford of Riselip, for speaking against images, pilgrimages, oblations, and against the sacrament of the altar. Also that, when this John Clark had made a weel for fish, Vulford coming by, asked him when he had made his weel, whether the weel now could turn again and make him; and he said, No. Even so, quoth he, God hath made all priests as thou hast made the weel, and how can they turn again and make God?

Robert Rowland, Thomas Hour, T. Rowland, Joan Frank, John Baker, William Frank the elder, William Frank the younger, and Alice Tredway detected Alice, wife of Richard Sanders of Amersham, for giving twelve-pence to Thomas Holmes to buy a certain book in English, for her daughter. To whom Thomas Holmes answered again, that a noble* would not suffice to buy it. Another time, for giving sixpence to the buying of a certain book in English, which cost five marks.†

Another time, Thomas Hour coming from Owburn, she asked, what news; and he said, that many were there condemned of heresy; and therefore he would lean to that way no more. Then said she, if he did so, he would gain nothing thereby. Whereby he had no more work with her husband, and after was put from his holy water clerkship in that town. Another time, for saying to Thomas Rowland these words; "Ye may see how Thomas Hour and others which laboured to have heretics detected before bishop Smith, are brought now to beggary; you may take example by them."

William Carder upon his oath was forced to detect Isabel Tracher his mistress, for that she, not being sick, but in good health, and being rebuked divers times of her husband for the same, yet would not go to the church, but tarried at home and kept her work, as well holy-day‡ as work-day, the space of three years together.

Isabel Gardiner and John Gardiner were forced by their oath to detect Thomas Rave of Great Marlow, for speaking

* Six shillings and eight-pence.

† A mark is thirteen shillings and four-pence.

‡ Saints' days. The observance of them is enforced more strictly by the church of Rome, than the keeping holy the sabbath, or Lord's day.

against pilgrimages, in the company of John and Elizabeth Gardiner, as he was going to our lady of Lincoln for his penance enjoined by bishop Smith. Also the same time, as he met certain coming from Saint John Shorne, for saying they were fools, and calling it idolatry. Also in the same voyage, when he saw a certain chapel in decay and ruin, he said, Lo, yonder is a fair milk-house down. Also, when he came to Lincoln, speaking against the sacrament of the altar, he said, that Christ sitteth in heaven at the right hand of the Father almighty; and brought forth this parable, saying, that Christ our Lord said these words, when he went from his disciples, and ascended to heaven, That once he was in sinners' hands, and would come there no more. Also when he came to Wycombe, there to do his penance, he bound his fagot with a silken lace. Also, being demanded of Dr. London, whether he had done his penance in coming to our lady of Lincoln? he answered, that bishop Smith had released him, to come to our lady of Missenden for six years. And three years he came; but whether he came any more, because he did not there register his name, therefore he said he could not prove it.

Roger Benet was forced by his oath to detect the wife of William Tylsworth of Hawkwell, for not thinking catholicly, that is, after the tradition of Rome, of the sacrament of the altar. And the wife of Robert Stamp, for not accomplishing her penance enjoined to her by bishop Smith. And John Butler, for having of him a certain book in English, containing a dialogue between a Jew and a christian.

Richard Vulford detected his own wife, deceased, and John Clark of Denham, for communing with him, against images, pilgrimage, and the sacrament of the altar.

Thomas Geffery of Uxbridge, and his wife departed, for communing against the sacrament of the altar, worshipping of saints, pilgrimage, &c. And Henry Vulman of Uxbridge, for speaking and teaching against the sacrament of the altar eleven years ago, and saying it was but a trifle.

John Scrivener the elder, detected Geldener the elder, his two daughters, Emma, sister of W. Tylsworth, martyr, and John Lee, carpenter, of Henley, for being present and hearkening unto Richard Benet reading the epistle of St. James in English.

John Grosar, being put to his oath, was examined whether he had a book of the gospels in English, who

confessed that he received such a book of Thomas Tykill, morrow-mass priest in Milk-street, and afterwards lent the same book to Thomas Spencer. Which Thomas Spencer, with his wife, used to read the same. After that it was lent to John Knight, who at length delivered the book to the vicar of Rickmansworth.

John Funge was forced by his oath to detect his brother Francis Funge, for speaking these words to him, which words he had learned of Thomas Clark: "If the sacrament of the altar be very God and man, flesh and blood, in form of bread, as priests say that it is, then have we many gods, and in heaven there is but one God. And if there were a hundred houseled* in one parish, and as many in another, then there must be more than one God. I will not deny, but it is a holy thing; but it is not the body of the Lord that suffered passion for us; for he was once in man's hands here, and ill entreated, and therefore he will never come in sinful men's hands again." Also for speaking these words; "The pope hath no authority to give pardon, and to release any man's soul from sin, and so from pain: it is nothing but blinding of the people, to have their money."

Francis Funge, and Alice his wife, were put to their oath to detect Robert Rave of Dorney, for saying, That the sacrament of the altar is not that body which was born of the blessed virgin Mary. Also for saying fourteen years past,† that folks were ill occupied that worshipped things graven with man's hands; for that which is graven with man's hand, is neither God nor our lady, but is made for a remembrance of saints. Nor ought we to worship any thing but God and our lady, and not images of saints, which are but stocks and stones.

Henry Dein was forced by his oath to detect Robert Freeman, parish priest of Orton, by Colebrook, for having and reading a suspected book; which book when he perceived to be seen in his hand, he closed it, and carried it to his chamber.

William Gudgame was forced by his oath to detect Joan Gudgame his own wife, for being in the same opinion of the sacrament that he was of: who notwithstanding did swear the same not to be true that her husband said.

* Received the sacrament.

† Fox observes, "So subtilly and sleightly these catholic prelates did use their inquisitions and examinations, that nothing was done or said among these 'known men,' fifteen or twenty years before, ever so covertly, but it was brought at length to their knowledge."

Thomas Clerke, forced by his oath, detected Christopher, a tinker, of Wycombe. The cause of this tinker's trouble was, for that he, coming to this man's house, and complaining to him of the poverty of the world, had these words, That there was never so misgoverned people, and that they bare themselves so bold upon pardons and pilgrimages, that they cared not whatsoever they did :* and so he departed. And seven days after that, this tinker coming again, asked him how his communication with him last did please him, and he said, Well. Then the tinker said, he knew more, and that he could tell him more, and bade him that he should believe in God in heaven; for there are many gods in earth, and there is but one God : and that he was once here, and was ill dealt with, and would no more come here till the day of doom : and that the sacrament of the altar was a holy thing, but not the flesh and blood of Christ, that was born of the virgin ; and charged him not to tell this to his wife, and especially to his wife's brother, a priest.

Afterward, as the priest was drying singing bread, being wet, which his sister had bought, Thomas Clerke said, that if every one of these were a god, then were there many gods. To whom the priest answered, that till the holy words were spoken over it, it was of no power ; and then it was very God, flesh and blood : saying moreover, that it was not meet for any layman to speak of such things. These words of the priest being after recited to the tinker, by the said Clerke, then said he, Let every man say what they will ; but you shall find it as I show you : and if you will take labour to come to my house, I will show you a farther proof of it if you will take heed, &c.

Robert Pope detected these following : Thomas Africke, alias Littlepage, and his wife. To these was objected for that they had communication and conference with this Robert Pope in the gospel of St. Matthew, before the great abjuration, in the town of Amersham.

Thomas Scrivener was detected, for that Pope had of him a book of the epistles in English.

To Benet Ward was laid, that Pope had received a book of the ten commandments from him. He had also the gospels of Matthew and Mark. Of Ward he learned his Christ-cross row : five parts of the eight beatitudes.

Thomas Man, and his wife, were detected because they

* The demoralizing effects of pardons and pilgrimages cannot be conceived at the present day.

had communed and talked with the said Robert Pope oftentimes in books of scripture and other matters of religion, concerning pilgrimage, adoration of images, and the sacrament of the Lord's body.

Robert Pope of Westenred, being before abjured, now again put to his oath, detected thirty-three: one was Richard Collins of Ginge, who was among them a great reader, and had a book of Wickliff's Wicket, and a book of Luke, and one of Paul, and a gloss of the Apocalypse. Also Thomas Collins, his father, who had a book of Paul, and a book of small epistles.

John Edmunds was charged for having a book, named W. Thorp.* Also, for reading in an English book after a marriage.

John Clerke of Clanfield was heard to say, that all the world was as well hallowed as the church or churchyard. And that it was as good to be buried in the field, as in the church or churchyard.

John Phip, and William Phip, for reading a certain treatise upon the paternoster, in English, which this John Phip read to him and to his father.

Robert Pope moreover detected Edward Pope, his own father, of Little Missenden, for hearing the gospel of Matthew read unto him, and for communing upon the same with this Robert Pope, his son. He detected likewise Edward Pope, his brother. Furthermore, he detected his own wife, who had before abjured under bishop Smith, to continue still in her opinions.

Robert Pope, before abjured, detected William Halliday, for having in his custody a book of the Acts of the Apostles, in English, which the said Robert Pope brought unto him, at the taking of Roger Dodd.

Thomas Philip, painter, and Laurence Taylor, of London. For that these two being in the house of Richard Collins, at Gynge, there did read, in an English book, the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, and Laurence read the first chapter of St. Luke's gospel.

John Harris and his wife, Alice Collins, wife of Richard Collins, who being together at Upton, in John Harris's house, talked of the Apocalypse, and of the Acts of the Apostles, and therefore were suspected and thus detected.

* The examinations of William Thorpe, see p. 39 of the present volume. They were at this time circulated in manuscript, not having been printed till some years after these persecutions.

Robert Collins being sworn upon the evangelists, detected John Harris, who spake against pilgrimage and images, and was heard to talk of seven lean, and seven fat oxen.

Richard Collins of Ginge, read unto the said Robert Collins the ten commandments; and afterwards taught him the epistle of James, and another small epistle of Peter, and after that, took him the gospel of St. John in English, and bade him read therein himself. Also for teaching him not to worship images, nor to set up candles, nor to go on pilgrimage.

Another crime against Richard Collins was, he taught this Robert that in all such things wherein he offended God, he should only shrive himself to God; and in things which offended man, he should shrive him to man. Also for teaching him that the sacrament of the altar is not very God, but a certain figurative thing of Christ in bread, and that the priest hath no power to consecrate the body of Christ. Also, for that the said Richard did teach him in Wickliff's Wicket, that a man may not make the body of our Lord, who made us: and how can we then make him again? The Father is unbegotten and unmade; the Son is only begotten and not made—and how then can man make that which is unmade? said he. And in the same book of Wickliff's Wicket, follow the words of Christ thus speaking, "If my words be heresy, then am I a heretic; and if my words be leasings, then am I a liar," &c. Also, another crime against Richard Collins; for having certain English books, as Wickliff's Wicket, the gospel of St. John, the epistles of St. Paul, James, and Peter, in English, an exposition of the Apocalypse, a book of our lady's matins in English, a book of Solomon in English, a book called the Prick of Conscience.

The aforesaid Robert Collins, being sworn upon the evangelists, detected John Harris for communing with him of the first chapter of St. John's gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God," &c. Also for communing of a chapter in Matthew of the eight beatitudes. Also for counselling him not to go on pilgrimage to saints, because they were idols.

R. Livord, W. Livord, Bruges and Joan his wife, Harris and his wife, and Richard Collins. All these were detected, for that they being together in Bruges' house, at Burford, were reading together in the book of the exposition of the

Apocalypse,* and communed concerning the matter of opening the book with seven clasps, &c.

T. Collins was charged for having a book of Paul and James in English.

Stacy, brickmaker, of Coleman-street, for having the book of the Apocalypse.

Thomas Philip, and Laurence, of London, for reading the epistle of St. Peter, in English, in the house of Robert Collins at Asthall. He also accused Joan Collins, his own sister, of Asthall, with several others.

John Collins, of Burford, appeached to the bishop Richard Collins, whose words were these, That the sacrament was not the true body of Christ in flesh and blood, but yet it ought to be reverenced, albeit not as the true body of Christ.

Also Thomas Collins, of Ginge, his own natural father! The crime against Thomas Collins was, that for eight years past, this Thomas Collins, his father, had taught this John, his son, in the presence of his mother, the ten commandments; and namely, that he should have but one God, and should worship nothing but God alone: and that to worship saints, and to go on pilgrimage, was idolatry. Also, that he should not worship the sacrament of the altar as God, for that it was but a token of the Lord's body. Which so much discontented this John Collins, that he said he would disclose his father's errors, and make him to be burned; but his mother entreated him not so to do.

John Collins also accused Robert Collins, of Asthall, that this Robert read to him in a certain thick book of scripture in English. Also John Edmunds and his wife, for that he read to this John the ten commandments; and told him that John Baptist said, that one should come after him whose buckle of his shoe he was not worthy to undo.

John Hakker, of London, coming to Burford, brought a book speaking of the ten plagues of Pharaoh. Also after that, another book, entreating of the seven sacraments.

He accused fourteen others; among them Eleanor Hedges of Burford, that she had burnt the sacrament in an oven.

Roger Dods, of Burford, by his oath was compelled to utter these persons here named. Sir John Drury, vicar of Windrish, in Worcestershire—the crime against this sir

* A work of Wickliff's on this subject is still extant, also an exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. Many writings of Wickliff and his contemporaries are referred to in these examinations.

John Drury was, for that when Roger Dods came first to him to be his servant, he sware him upon a book to keep his counsels in all things; and after that he showed him a certain woman in his house, whom he said to be his wife; counselling moreover the said Roger Dods, upon an embring (or fast) day, to sup with bread and cheese, saying, that which goeth into a man's body defileth not a man's soul, but that which goeth out of the body defileth both body and soul.

Also, the said vicar taught him the A B C,* to the intent he should have understanding in the Apocalypse, wherein he said that he should perceive all the falsehood of the world, and all the truth. He said furthermore unto him, when he had been at the lady of Worcester, and at the blood of Hales,† which had cost him eighteen pence; but that he had done as an ill husband, that had ploughed his land and sown it, but nothing to the purpose; for he had worshipped man's handiwork, and cast away his money, which had been better given to the poor; for he should worship but one God, and no handiwork of man. Also, when the people would offer candles, where he was vicar, to Mary Magdalen, he would take them away, and say they were fools that brought them thither.

John Phip, of Hichenden, for reading unto the said Roger Dods, a certain gospel in English.

William Phip, of Hichenden. This William had exhorted Roger Dods that he should worship no images, nor commit idolatry, but worship one God; and told the same Roger, that it was good for a man to be merry and wise; meaning that he should keep close what was told him; for else strait punishment would follow.

Roger Parker, of Hichenden, that he was foully to blame for burning of his books, for they were worth a hundred marks. To whom John answered, that he had rather burn his books, than that his books should burn him.

John Ledisdall, of Hungerford, for reading of the bible in Robert Bruges' house, at Burford, upon holy-rood day, with Collins, Livord, Thomas Hall, and others.

Robert Collins and his wife; John Collins and his wife;

* The A B C here mentioned, probably was a short poem, the lines of which began with the letters of the alphabet in regular succession. Fox has copied it from one of the bishop's registers. It is attributed to Thorp, and denounces the pride and other vices of the Romish ecclesiastics.

† See Latimer, p. 65.

for buying a bible of Stacie, for twenty shillings. The father of Robert Collins had been of this doctrine from the year 1480.

Henry Phip, for that he, being asked of this Dods, A. D. 1515, whether he would go to Wycombe or not, answered again, that he was chosen roodman, that is, keeper of the roodloft, saying, that he must go and light a candle before his block almighty.

John Edmunds accused Philip Brabant, servant of Richard Collins, for saying that the sacrament of the altar was made in the remembrance of Christ's own body, but it was not the body of Christ.

The Shepherd's Calendar was also accused and detected; because the same Edmunds said that he was persuaded by this book, reading these words; that the sacrament was made in the remembrance of Christ. The book of William Thorpe likewise was much complained of, both by this John Edmunds, and divers others.

Richard Collins was a great doer among these good men; and was much complained upon by divers, and also by this Edmunds, for bringing with him a book called the King of Beeme, into their company, and did read thereof a great part unto them, in this Edmund's house of Burford.

Alice Collins, wife of R. Collins, likewise was a famous woman among them, and had a good memory, and could recite much of the scriptures, and other good books; and therefore when any conventicle of these men did meet at Burford, commonly she was sent for, to recite unto them the declaration of the ten commandments, and the epistles of Peter and James.

Joan Collins, daughter of Richard and of Alice Collins, following her father's and mother's steps, was noted, for that she had learned with her father and mother the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins, the seven works of mercy, the five wits bodily and ghostly, the eight blessings,* and five chapters of St. James's epistle.

Agnes Edmunds was detected by her father, that he brought her to the house of Richard Collins, to service, to the intent she might be instructed there in God's law, where she had learned likewise the ten commandments, the five wits bodily and ghostly, and the seven deadly sins.

Thomas White, and Thomas Clerke, did appeach William Dorset, who said, that pilgrimage was of none effect,

* Short tracts with these titles are found among the writings of Wickliff.

and offering candles, or other things to saints, stood in no stead, and was but cost lost. Also, when his wife was going on pilgrimage, and he asked, Whither? and she said, To our lady of Willesdon. Our lady, said he, is in heaven.

John Baker, being urged upon his oath, did disclose John Edmunds, because that he, talking with the said Baker of pilgrimage, bade him go offer his money to the image of God. When the other asked what that was, he said that the image of God was the poor people, blind and lame; and said that he offended almighty God in going on pilgrimage.

William Phip, abjured by his oath, did accuse Henry Phip, his own son, for communing with Roger Dods against pilgrimage and adoration of images.

John Brabant, the elder son of John Brabant, did nominate John Hakker and Robert Pope, for reading the holy scripture in his father's house, and for saying these words, "Christ made his maundy, and said, Take this bread, eat it, this is my body; take this wine, drink it, this is my blood: and priests say by these words, that the sacrament of the altar is the body of Christ."

Also John Brabant his father, and his mother, for being present when Hakker read the scripture in their house.

Concerning this John Brabant, here is to be noted the form and effect of the bishop's examination, asking and demanding thus of the said Brabant; Whether he ever heard John Hakker read the holy scripture against the determination of the church? By the which words, if he mean that it is against the determination of the church to read the holy scripture, it may thereby appear to be a blind church. And if they mean that the holy scripture contains any such thing which is against the determination of the church, then their church appears to be contrary to God, seeing it determines one thing, and God's word another.

John à Lee denounced John à Weedon. When this John à Lee had told the said Weedon how the bishop had said in his sermon these words, That all which were of the sect of heretics believed that God was in heaven, but they believed not that the body of Christ on the altar was God: to this he answering again, said, Ye be bold upon that word! deriding the bishop in so saying.

Joan Steventon denounced Alice Collins for teaching the said Joan Steventon, in Lent, the ten commandments, thus beginning, "I am thy Lord God that led thee out of the land of Egypt and brought thee out of the house of

thraldom. Thou shalt not have any alien Gods before me, neither make to thee any image graven with man's hands, that is in heaven above, neither in the earth beneath," &c. Also for teaching her the first chapter of St. John's gospel; "In the beginning was the Word," &c. and John Harris for teaching her the first chapter of Peter.

Sir John, a priest, and also Robert Robertson, detected M. Cotismore, of Brightwell. Also mistress Cotismore, otherwise called mistress Doly, for speaking these words to one John Bainton, her servant: That if she went to her chamber and prayed there, she should have as much merit as though she went to Walsingham on pilgrimage. Also, when the said sir John came to her after the death of master Cotismore, his master, requiring her to send one John Stainer, her servant, to our lady of Walsingham, for master Cotismore, who in his life-time being sick, promised in his own person to visit that place, she would not consent thereto, nor let her servant go. Also, for saying, that when women go to offer to images or saints, they did it to show their new gay gear, and that images were but carpenters' chips; and that folks go on pilgrimage more for the green way* than for devotion.

John Hakker did detect Thomas Vincent, of London, for giving this Hakker a book of St. Matthew, in English.

Richard Collins, for receiving of the said Hakker a book of the ten commandments in English.

William Gunne, for receiving of Hakker a book of the ten plagues sent of God to Pharaoh. And several others.

Thomas Grove, and also John Reading, being put to their oath, did detect John Heron for having a book of the exposition of the gospels fairly written in English.

And Richard Grace for speaking these words following: That our blessed lady was the godmother to St. Katharine; and therefore the legend is not true in saying, that Christ did marry St. Katharine. Also, for saying of the picture of St. Nicholas, being newly painted, that he was not worthy to stand in the rood-loft, but that it better beseemed him to stand in the belfry, &c.

In the above table, reader, thou hast to see and understand, first, the number and names of these good men and women troubled and molested by the church of Rome, and all in one year; of whom few or none were learned,

* The pleasure of the journey.

being simple labourers and artificers, but as it pleased the Lord to work in them knowledge and understanding, by reading a few ENGLISH BOOKS, such as they could get in corners. Secondly, what were their opinions we have also described. And, thirdly, herein is to be noted moreover, the blind ignorance and uncourteous dealing of the bishops against them, not only in that they, by their violent oaths, and captious interrogatories, constrained the children to accuse their parents, and parents the children, the husband the wife, and the wife the husband, &c. but especially in that most wrongfully they so afflicted them, without any good reason or cause, only for the sincere verity of God's word, and reading his holy scriptures.

Now it remains, that as you have heard their opinions, which principally in number were four, so also we declare their reasons and scriptures whereupon they grounded, and after that, consequently, the order and manner of penance enjoined to them by the bishop. And first against pilgrimage, and against worshipping of images, they used this text of the Apocal. ix. I saw horses in a vision, and the heads of them, as the heads of lions: smoke, fire, and brimstone, came out of their mouths: with these three plagues the third part of men were slain, of the smoke, and of the fire, and of the brimstone that came out of the mouths of them. They that were not slain of these three plagues, were such as worshipped not devils, and images of gold and silver, of brass, of tree, and of stone, &c. Also they used and alleged the first commandment, that there is but one God, and that they ought not to worship more gods than one, &c.

And as touching the sacrament, and the right doctrine thereof, they had their instruction partly out of Wickliff's Wicket, partly out of the Shepherd's Calendar; where they read that the sacrament was made in remembrance of Christ, and ought to be received in remembrance of his body, &c. Moreover, they alleged and followed the words of Christ, spoken at the supper, at what time he, sitting with his disciples, and making with them his maundy, took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to his disciples; and said, Eat ye; this (reaching forth his arm, and showing the bread in his hand, and then noting his own natural body, and touching the same, and not the bread consecrate) is my body, which shall be betrayed for you: do this in remembrance of me. And likewise he took the wine and bade them drink, saying, This is my blood which is of the new testament, &c.

Also, that Christ our Saviour sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and there shall be unto the day of doom. Wherefore they believed that in the sacrament of the altar was not the very body of Christ.

Also, said one of them, "Men speak much of the sacrament of the altar, but this will I bide by, that upon Share Thursday Christ brake bread unto his disciples, and bade them eat it, saying, it was his flesh and blood. And then he went from them, and suffered his passion: and then he rose from death to life, and ascended into heaven, and there sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and there he is to come unto the day of doom, when he shall judge both quick and dead." And therefore how he should be here in the form of bread, he said they could not see.

Such reasons and allegations as these and others like, were taken out of the scripture, and out of the Shepherd's Calendar, Wickliff's Wicket, and out of other books they had amongst them. And although there was no learned man with them to ground them in their doctrine, yet they, conferring and communing together among themselves, did convert one another, the Lord's hand working with them marvellously: so that in short space, the number of these known, or justfast men, as they were then termed, exceedingly increased, in such sort, that the bishop seeing the matter almost past his power, made his complaint to the king, and required his aid for suppression of these men. Whereupon, king Henry being then young, and unexpert in the bloody practices and blind leadings of these apostolical prelates, incensed with his suggestions and cruel complaints, directed down letters to his sheriffs, bailiffs, officers, and subjects, for the aid of the bishop in this behalf.

The bishop, thus being armed no less with the authority of the king's letter, than incited with his own fierceness, foreslaked no time, but speedily to accomplish his moody violence upon the poor flock of Christ, called before him, sitting upon his tribunal seat, both these aforenamed persons, and all others in his diocese who were ever so little noted or suspected to incline toward those opinions; of whom to such as had but newly been taken, and had not before abjured, he enjoined most strait and rigorous penance. The others in whom he could find any relapse, yea albeit they submitted themselves ever so humbly to his favourable courtesy; and though also at his request, and for hope of pardon, they had showed themselves great detecters of their brethren, being moreover of him fed and flattered there-

unto; yet notwithstanding, contrary to his fair words, and their expectation, he spared not, but read sentence of relapse against them, committing them to the secular arm to be burnt.*

[Then follows a list of forty-eight persons, who abjured, living at thirty different places.]

The books and opinions which these forty-eight were charged with, and for which they were compelled to abjure, are partly before expressed, and partly here follows a brief sum of their opinions.

The opinions of many of these persons were, that they never believed in the sacrament of the altar, nor ever would; and that it was not as men did take it. For that he was known of his neighbour, to be "a good fellow," meaning that he was a known man.

Some for saying, that they of Amersham, which had been abjured before by bishop Smith, were good men, and perfect christians, and simple folk which could not answer for themselves, and therefore were oppressed by power of the bishop. Some for hiding others in their barns.

Some for reading the scripture, or treatises of scripture in English: some for hearing the same read. Some for defending, some for marrying with, them which had abjured. Some for saying that matrimony was not a sacrament. Some for saying that worshipping of images was idolatry; some for calling images carpenters' chips; some for calling them stocks and stones; some for calling them dead things. Some for saying that money spent upon pilgrimage, served but to maintain thieves and harlots. Some for calling the image in the rood loft, Block almighty. Others for saying that nothing graven with man's hand was to be worshipped. Some for saying that they which die, pass straight either to heaven or hell, &c. &c.

Isabel Bartlett was brought before the bishop, and abjured for lamenting her husband, when the bishop's man came for him, and saying that he was an undone man, and she a dead woman!† And for saying that Christ departing

* The peculiar situation in which many stood, whose names have been mentioned as having been previously convicted of heresy, will account for the confessions they made.

† Robert Bartlet has been already mentioned, page 212. He was a rich man, who for his profession of the truth was put out of his farm and goods, and was condemned to be kept in the monastery of Ashridge, where he wore on his right sleeve a square piece of cloth, the space of seven years together.—*Fox.* When we recollect the

from his disciples into heaven, said, that once he was in sinners' hands, and would come there no more, Heb. ix. 24—28. This persecution, as the reader has seen, began with the Bartlets, and bishop Longland having obtained informations against them, proceeded step by step till he had made a full discovery.

Some for receiving the sacrament at Easter, and doubting whether it was the very body of Christ, and did not confess their doubt to their spiritual father, the priest.

Some for saying that the pope had no authority to give pardon, or to release man's soul from sin, and so from pain, and that it was nothing but blinding of the people, and to get their money.

The penance enjoined to these parties by this John Longland, bishop of Lincoln, was almost uniform, and all after one condition, save only that they were separately committed and divided into several monasteries there to be kept and found of alms all their life, except they were otherwise dispensed by the bishop. For example, I have here adjoined the bishop's letter for one of the said number, who was sent to the abbey of Evesham, there to be kept in perpetual penance. By which one, an estimation may be taken of the rest, who were bestowed likewise to Osney, to Frideswide, to Abingdon, to Tame, to Bisseter, to Dorchester, to Notley, to Ashridge, and divers more. The copy of the bishop's letter sent to the abbot of Evesham, here follows under written.

The Bishop's letter to the Abbot of Evesham.

"My loving brother, I recommend me hastily unto you; and whereas I have, according to the law, put this bearer R. T. to perpetual penance within your monastery of Evesham, there to live as a penitent, and not otherwise, I pray you, and nevertheless, according unto the law, command you to receive him, and see ye order him there, accordingly to his injunctions which he will show you if ye require the same. As for his lodging, he will bring it with him.* And his meat and drink, he may have such as ye give of your alms. And if he can so order himself by his labour within your house in your business, whereby he

general character of the inmates of the monasteries, we may readily suppose the painful life an unprotected Lollard would lead within the walls of those establishments.

* He must sleep on the bare ground!

may deserve his meat and drink, so may you order him, as ye see convenient to his deserts, so that he pass not the precinct of your monastery. And thus fare you heartily well. From my place," &c.

The residue of the penances and punishments inflicted on these men, little or nothing disagree, but had one order in them all. The manner and form whereof in the said bishop's register proceed as follows.

Penance enjoined under pain of relapse by John Longland, bishop of Lincoln, the 19th day of December, A. D. 1521.

"That every one of them shall upon a market-day, such as shall be limited unto them, in the market time, go thrice about the market at Burford, and then stand upon the highest greece (step) of the cross there, a quarter of an hour, with a fagot of wood every one of them upon his shoulder; and every one of them once to bear a fagot of wood upon their shoulders before their procession upon a Sunday, which shall be limited unto them at Burford, from the quire door going out, to the quire door going in; and all the high mass time to hold the same fagot upon their shoulders, kneeling upon the greece before the high altar there, and every of them likewise to do likewise in their own parish church, upon such a Sunday as shall be limited unto them: and once to bear a fagot at a general procession at Uxbridge, when they shall be assigned thereto: and once to bear a fagot at the burning of a heretic, when they shall be admonished thereto.

"Also every one of them to fast on bread and ale only, every Friday during their life, and every eve of Corpus Christi every one of them to fast on bread and water, during their life, unless sickness unfeigned hinder the same. Also to say every of them every Sunday and every Friday during their life, our lady's psalter once, and if they forget it one day, to say as much another day for the same.* Also, they nor any of them, to hide their mark upon their cheek,† neither with hat, cap, hood, kerchief, napkin, nor

* One hundred and fifty ave marias interspersed with fifteen paternosters, all in Latin.

† The manner of their burning in the cheek was this:—Their necks were tied fast to a post or stay, with towels, and their hands holden that they might not stir; and so the iron, being hot, was put to their cheeks, and thus bare they the prints and marks of the Lord Jesus about them.—*Fox.* When Bernard and Morden were burned at Amersham, thirty persons were branded at the same time. Some who were thus marked were living when Fox's history was published.

otherwise, nor shall they suffer their beards to grow past fourteen days, nor ever haunt again together with any suspect person or persons, unless it be in the open market, fair, church, or common inn, or alehouse, where other people may see their conversation. And all these injunctions they and every of them, to fulfil with their penance, and every part of the same, under pain of relapse."*

And thus have you the names, with the causes and the penance of them which were at this present time abjured. By which word "abjured," is meant that they were constrained by their oath, swearing upon the evangelists, and subscribing with their hand, and a cross to the same, that they did utterly and voluntarily renounce, detest, and forsake, and never should hold hereafter these, or any other like opinions, contrary to the determination of the holy mother church of Rome; and farther, that they should detect unto their ordinary whomsoever they should see, or suspect hereafter to teach, hold, or maintain the same. Then follows the names of them, which were condemned for relapse, and committed unto the secular power.

Among these aforenamed persons, which thus submitted themselves, and were put to penance, certain there were who because they had abjured before, as is under bishop Smith, were now condemned for relapse, and had sentence read against them, and so were committed to the secular arm, to be burned. Whose names here follow, Thomas Bernard, James Morden, Robert Rave, and John Scrivener. To these may be joined also Joan Norman and Thomas Holmes.

This Thomas Holmes, although he had disclosed and detected many of his brethren, thinking thereby to please the bishop, and to save himself, and was thought to be a feed man of the bishop for the same; yet notwithstanding, in the same bishop's register appears the sentence of relapse, and condemnation written against him; and most likely he was also adjudged and executed with the other.

As touching the burning of John Scrivener, here is to be noted, that his children were compelled to set fire unto their father, in like manner as Joan Clark, the daughter of William Tylsworth, was constrained to give fire to the burning of her own father. The example of which cruelty, as it is contrary both to God and nature, so it hath not been seen nor heard of in the memory of the heathen.

* Being burned as relapsed heretics.

The extracts from the bishops' registers, printed by Fox, contain many other names and further particulars respecting the persecuted Lollards from A. D. 1508 to 1528. Enough, however, has been given to show how widely the doctrines of truth were diffused in Buckinghamshire, and there is sufficient evidence that other parts of the kingdom had been blessed with the like influences. The reader will bear in mind that these records prove that the light of divine truth was not extinguished in our land from the time of Wickliff to that of Luther. In reference to this important fact, Fox has observed as follows :

"This was before the name of Luther was heard of among the people in these countries. Wherefore, they are much beguiled and misinformed which condemn this kind of doctrine, now received, of novelty, asking, Where was this church and religion before Luther's time? To whom it may be answered, that this religion and form of doctrine, first planted by the apostles, and taught by true bishops, afterwards decayed, and now reformed again, although it was not received or admitted of the pope's clergy before Luther's time, neither yet is received, yet it was received of others, in whose hearts it pleased the Lord secretly to work, and that of a great number who both professed and suffered for the same."

Fox adds, "The church of England hath not lacked great multitudes, which tasted and followed the sweetness of God's holy word, almost in as ample manner, for the number of well-disposed hearts, as now.* Although public authority to maintain the open preaching of the gospel then was wanting, yet the secret multitude of true professors was not much unequal. Certainly, the fervent zeal of those christian days seemed much superior to these our days and times, as manifestly may appear by their sitting up all night in reading and hearing. Also by their expenses and charges in buying books in English ; some gave five marks, some more, some less, for a book ; some gave a load of hay for a few chapters of St. James or of St. Paul in English. In which rarity of books and want of teachers, I greatly marvel and muse to note in the registers, and to consider how the word of truth notwithstanding did multiply so exceedingly as it did among them. Wherein is to be seen, no doubt, the marvellous working of God's mighty power. For so I find and observe in considering the registers, how

* The early part of the reign of queen Elizabeth.

one neighbour resorting and conferring with another, eftsoons* with a few words of their first or second talk, did win and persuade their minds to that wherein they desired to persuade them, touching the truth of God's word and his sacraments. To see their travails, their earnest seeking, their burning zeal, their readings, their watchings, their sweet assemblies, their love and concord, their godly living, their marrying with the faithful, MAY MAKE US NOW IN THESE OUR DAYS OF FREE PROFESSION TO BLUSH FOR SHAME."

To these simple but impressive remarks of the martyrologist, it may be well to add, that if the reader has not found in the preceding examinations the full declarations of justification by faith in Christ alone, which he may have expected, he should remember that the bishops' registers only record the points upon which the followers of the truth were chiefly called to give an account. They of course were those wherein the conduct of the Lollards differed from the practices of the Romish church. The procedure of that church ever has been, not directly to deny the efficacy of the blood of Christ, but to endeavour to render it of none effect by human additions. These additions, we have seen, the Lollards opposed, and earnestly studied the scriptures; there could be no other reason WHY they should have done so in the manner, and to the extent to which they proceeded, but that the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, was revealed among them by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Doubtless they were persecuted, because the ROOT of the matter was found in them.

* Speedily.

THE HISTORY

OF

THOMAS GARRET,

AND OF HIS TROUBLE IN OXFORD, A. D. 1526, TESTIFIED AND RECORDED BY ANTHONY DALABER, WHO WAS THERE PRESENT AT THE SAME TIME.*

About the year of our Lord, 1526, Master Garret, or Garrard, curate of Honey Lane, in London, came unto Oxford, and brought with him sundry books in Latin, treating of the scripture, and Tindal's first translation of the new testament in English, which books he sold to divers scholars in Oxford.

After he had been there a while, and had disposed of those books, news came from London that he was searched for through all London, to be apprehended and taken as a heretic, and to be imprisoned for selling of those heretical books, as they termed them, because they spake against the usurped authority, and erroneous doctrine of the bishop of Rome, and his no less impure and filthy synagogue. For it was not unknown to cardinal Wolsey, and to the bishop of London, and to others of that ungodly generation, that master Garret had a great number of those books, and that he was gone to Oxford to make sale of them there to such as he knew to be lovers of the gospel. Wherefore they determined forthwith to make a private search through all Oxford to apprehend and imprison him, and to burn all his aforesaid books, and him too, if they could, so burning hot was their charity. But at that time one of the aforesaid proctors, called master Cole, of Magdalen college, who after was cross-bearer unto cardinal Wolsey, was well acquainted with master

* When cardinal Wolsey founded Frideswide college, (now Christ Church,) at Oxford, he appointed several able scholars of Cambridge to his new foundation, some of whom were inclined to the protestant doctrines. This being discovered, they were accused of heresy, and so severely treated, that three died in consequence of their imprisonment. Frith and others escaped for a time. The narrative of Dalaber refers to that period, and shows the progress which the doctrines of truth had begun to make in Oxford so early as A. D. 1526.

Garret, and therefore he gave secret warning unto a friend or two of master Garret's, of this private search, and willed that he should forthwith, as secretly as he could, depart out of Oxford. For if he were taken in the same search, no remedy but he should be forthwith sent up unto the cardinal, and so he should be committed unto the tower.

The Christmas before that time, I, Anthony Dalaber, then scholar of Alborne Hall, who had books of master Garret's, had been in my country in Dorsetshire at Stalbridge, where I had a brother, the parson of that parish, who was very desirous to have a curate out of Oxford, and willed me to get him one there if I could. This just occasion being offered, it was thought good among the brethren, for so did we not only call one another, but were indeed so one to another, that master Garret, changing his name, should be sent with my letters into Dorsetshire unto my brother, to serve him there for a time, until he might secretly from thence convey himself somewhere over the sea. According hereunto I wrote in all haste possible unto my brother, for master Garret to be his curate, but not declaring what he was, for my brother was a rank papist, and afterwards was the most mortal enemy that ever I had for the gospel's sake.

So the Wednesday in the morning before Shrovetide, master Garret departed out of Oxford, towards Dorsetshire, with my letters for his new service. How far he went, and by what occasion he so soon returned, I know not. But the Friday next, in the night time, he came again to Radley's house, where he lay before, and so after midnight, in the private search which was then made for him, he was apprehended and taken there in his bed by the two proctors, and on the Saturday in the morning was delivered unto one Dr. Cotisford, master of Lincoln college, then being commissary of the university, who kept him as prisoner in his own chamber. There was great joy and rejoicing among all the papists for his apprehension, and especially with Dr. London, warden of the New college, and Dr. Higdon, dean of Frideswides, two archpapists. Who immediately sent their letters in post haste unto the cardinal, to inform him of the apprehension of this notable heretic; for which their doing, they were well assured to have great thanks. But of all this sudden hurly burly I was utterly ignorant, so that I knew neither of master Garret's sudden return, neither that he was so taken, until

that afterward he came unto my chamber, being then in Gloucester college, as a man amazed, and as soon as he saw me, he said he was undone, for he was taken. Thus he spake unadvisedly in the presence of a young man that came with him. When the young man was departed, I asked him what he was, and what acquaintance he had with him. He said he knew him not, but he had been to seek a monk of his acquaintance in that college, who was not in his chamber, and thereupon desired his servant, not knowing my chamber, for I was newly removed thither, to bring him to me; and so forthwith declared how he was returned and taken that night in the private search, as ye have heard, and that now, when the commissary and all his company were gone to evensong, and had locked him alone in his chamber, he hearing nobody stirring in the college, put back the bar of the lock with his finger, and so came straight unto Gloucester college, to speak with that monk, if he had been within, who had also bought books of him.

Then said I unto him, "Alas, master Garret, by this your uncircumspect coming unto me, and speaking so before this young man, you have disclosed yourself, and utterly undone me." I asked him why he went not unto my brother with my letters accordingly. He said, after that he was gone a day's journey and a half, he was so fearful, that his heart would no other, but that he must needs return again unto Oxford, and so he came again on Friday at night, and then was taken, as ye heard before. But now, with deep sighs, and plenty of tears, he prayed me to help to convey him away, and so he cast off his hood and his gown, wherein he came unto me, and desired me to give him a coat with sleeves, if I had any, and told me that he would go into Wales, and thence convey himself into Germany, if he might. Then I put on him a sleeved coat of mine. He would also have had another manner of cap of me, but I had none but priestlike, such as his own was.

Then kneeled we both down together on our knees, and lifted up our hearts and hands to God our heavenly Father, desiring him with plenty of tears, so to conduct and prosper him in his journey, that he might well escape the danger of all his enemies, to the glory of his holy name, if his good pleasure and will so were, and then we embraced and kissed one the other, the tears so abundantly flowing out from both our eyes, that we all bewet both our faces,

and scarcely for sorrow could we speak one to the other, and so he departed from me, apparelled in my coat, being committed to the tuition of our almighty and merciful Father.

When he was gone down the stairs from my chamber, I straightways did shut my chamber door, and went into my study, and took the new testament in my hands, kneeled down on my knees, and with many a deep sigh and salt tear, I did with much deliberation read over the tenth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel; and when I had so done, with fervent prayer I did commit unto God that our dearly beloved brother Garret; earnestly beseeching him, in and for Jesus Christ's sake, his only begotten Son our Lord, that he would vouchsafe, not only safely to conduct and keep our said dear brother from the hands of all his enemies, but also that he would endue his tender and lately born little flock in Oxford, with heavenly strength, by his Holy Spirit, that they might be well able thereby valiantly to withstand to his glory, all their fierce enemies; and also might quietly, to their own salvation, with all godly patience, bear Christ's heavy cross, which I now saw was presently to be laid on their young and weak backs, unable to bear so huge a burden, without the great help of his Holy Spirit.

This done, I laid aside my book safe, folded up master Garret's gown and hood, and laid them in my press among my apparel, and so having put on my short gown, shut up my study and chamber doors, and went towards Frideswides,* to speak with that worthy martyr of God, master Clarke, and others, and to declare unto them what had happened that afternoon. But of purpose I went by St. Mary's church, to go first unto Corpus Christi college, to speak with Dyet and Udall, my faithful brethren and fellows in the Lord there. But I met by the way with a brother of ours, one master Eden, fellow of Magdalen college, who, as soon as he saw me, came with a pitiful countenance unto me, saying, that we were all undone, for master Garret was returned again to Oxford, and taken the last night in the privy search, and was in prison with the commissary. I said it was not so. He said it was so. I told him it could not be so, for I was sure he was gone. He answered me and said, I know he was gone with your letters, but he came again yesterday in the evening, and was taken in his bed at Radley's this night in the private

* Now part of Christ Church.

search. "For," quoth he, "I heard our proctor, master Cole, say and declare the same this day in our college to divers of the house." But I told him again, that I was well assured Garret was now gone, for I spake with him later than either the proctor or commissary did. And then I declared the whole matter unto him; how and when he came unto me, and how he went his way, willing him to declare the same unto others our brethren whom he should meet with, and to give God hearty thanks for his wonderful deliverance, and to pray him also that he would grant him safely to pass away from all his enemies, and told him that I was going unto master Clarke, of Frideswides, to declare unto him this matter, for I knew and thought verily that he, and divers others there, were in great sorrow for this matter. Then I went straight to Frideswides, and evensong was begun, and the dean and the other canons were there in their grey amices; they were almost at Magnificat before I came thither; I stood at the choir door and heard master Taverner play, and others of the chapel there sing, with and among whom I myself was wont to sing; but now my singing and music was turned into sighing and musing.

As I thus and there stood, in came Dr. Cotisford, the commissary, as fast as ever he could go, bareheaded, as pale as ashes, (I knew his grief well enough,) and to the dean he goeth into the choir, where he was sitting in his stall, and talked with him very sorrowfully: what I know not, but whereof, I might and did well and truly guess. I went aside from the choir door, to see and hear more. The commissary and dean came out of the choir wonderfully troubled, as it seemed. About the middle of the church Dr. London met them, puffing, blustering, and blowing, like a hungry and greedy lion seeking his prey. They talked together awhile, but the commissary was much blamed of them for keeping of his prisoner so negligently, insomuch that he wept for sorrow: and it was known abroad that master Garret was escaped, and gone out of the commissary's chamber at evensong time, but whither no man could tell. These doctors departed, and sent abroad their servants and spies everywhere. Master Clarke about the middle of Compline,* came forth of the choir. I followed him to his chamber, and declared what was happened that afternoon, of master Garret's escape. He

* A Romish service, the last at night, by which the daily service was completed.

was glad, for he knew of his foretaking. Then he sent for one master Summer and master Bets, fellows and canons there. In the mean while he gave me a very good exhortation, praying God to give me and all the rest of our brethren, the wisdom of the serpent and the simplicity of the dove, for we should have shortly much need thereof, as he verily thought. When master Summer and master Bets were come unto him, he caused me to declare again the whole matter unto them two, and they were very glad that master Garret was so delivered, trusting that he should escape all his enemies. Then desiring them to tell unto our other brethren what was happened, for there were divers others in that college, I went to Corpus Christi college to comfort our brethren there being in like heaviness. There I tarried and supped with them. At which supper, we were not very merry, considering our state and peril at hand.

When we had ended our supper, and committed our whole cause with fervent sighs and hearty prayers unto God our heavenly Father, I went to Alborne Hall, and there lay that night. In the morning I was up very early, and so soon as I could get out of the door, I went straight towards Gloucester college to my chamber. It had rained that morning, and with my going I had besprinkled my hose and shoes with mire. And when I was come unto Gloucester college, which was about six of the clock, I found the gates fast shut. Whereat I much marvelled, for they were wont to be opened daily long before that time. Then I walked up and down by the wall there, a whole hour before the gates were opened. In the mean while my musing head being full of forecasting cares, and my sorrowful heart flowing with doleful sighs, I fully determined in my conscience before God, that if I should be taken and examined, I would accuse no man, nor declare any thing further than I did already perceive was manifestly known before. And so when the gate was opened, thinking to shift myself, and to put on a longer gown, I went in towards my chamber, and going up the stairs would have opened my door, but I could not for a long time do it. Whereby I perceived that my lock had been meddled with, and therewith was somewhat altered. Yet at last, with much ado, I opened the lock and went in. When I came in, I saw my bed all tossed and tumbled, my clothes in my press thrown down, and my study door open. Whereof I was much amazed, and thought verily that

some search was made there that night for master Garret, and that it was known of his being with me, by the monk's man that brought him to my chamber.

Now was there lying in the next chamber unto me a monk, who as soon as he heard me in the chamber, came to me, and told how master Garret was sought for in my chamber that night, and what ado there was made by the commissary and the two proctors, with bills and swords thrust through my bed straw, and how every corner of my chamber was searched for master Garret. And albeit his gown and his hood lay there in my press with my clothes, yet they perceived them not. Then he told me he was commanded to bring me as soon as I came in, unto the prior of the students, named Anthony Dunstan, a monk of Westminster. This so troubled me that I forgot to make clean my hose and shoes, and to shift me into another gown; and therefore so all bedirted as I was, and in my short gown, I went with him to the said prior's chamber, where I found the said prior standing and looking for my coming. He asked me where I had been that night. I told him I lay at Alborne Hall, with my old bedfellow Fitzjames, but he would not believe me. He asked me if master Garret were with me yesterday, I told yea. Then he would know where he was, and wherefore he came unto me: I told him I knew not where he was, except he were at Woodstock. For so, said I, he had showed me that he would go thither, because one of the keepers there, his friend, had promised him a piece of venison to make merry with all the Shrovetide, and that he would have borrowed a hat and a pair of high shoes of me, but I had none to lend him. This tale I thought meetest.* Then had he spied on my forefinger a big ring of silver very well double gilt, with two letters A. D. engraved in it for my name: I suppose he thought it to be gold. He required to see it. I took it unto him. When he had it in his hand, he said it was his ring, for therein was his name; an A. for Anthony, and a D. for Dunstan. When I heard him so say, I wished in my heart to be as well delivered from and out of his company, as I was assured to be delivered from my ring for ever.

* Nothing can justify the false account given by Dalaber, and his repeating it again afterwards. By this untruth he seems to have increased his own difficulties, and it was of no avail to his friend. This duplicity may be noticed as almost a solitary instance of the kind among the reformers.

Then he called for pen, ink, and paper, and commanded me to write when and how Garret came unto me, and where he was become. I had not written scarcely three words, but the chief beadle with two or three of the commissary's men, were come unto master prior, requiring him straightways to bring me away unto Lincoln college, to the commissary, and to Dr. London. Whither when I was brought into the chapel, there I found doctor Cotisford, commissary, doctor Higdon, then dean of the Cardinal's college, and doctor London, warden of the New college, standing together at the altar in the chapel. When I was brought unto them, after salutations given and taken between them, they called for chairs and sat down, and called for me to come to them. And first they asked what my name was. I told them that my name was Anthony Dalaber. Then they also asked me how long I had been student in the university, and I told them almost three years. And they asked me what I studied. I told them that I had read sophistry and logic in Alborne Hall, and now was removed unto Gloucester college to study the civil law, the which the aforesaid prior of the students affirmed to be true. Then they asked me whether I knew master Garret, and how long I had known him. I told them I knew him well, and had known him almost a twelvemonth. They asked me when he was with me. I told them, yesterday at afternoon.

Now by this time, whilst they had me in this talk, one came unto them which was sent for, with pen, ink, and paper. I believe it was the clerk of the university. As soon as he was come, there was a board and trestles, with a form for him to sit on, set between the doctors and me, and a great mass book laid before me, and I was commanded to lay my right hand on it, and to swear that I should truly answer unto such articles and interrogatories as I should be by them examined upon. I made danger of it a while at first, but afterward being persuaded by them, partly by fair words, and partly by great threats, I promised to do as they would have me, but in my heart nothing so meant to do. So I laid my hand on the book, and one of them gave me my oath, and that done commanded me to kiss the book. Then made they great courtesy between them who should examine me, and minister interrogatories unto me. At the last, the rankest papistical pharisee of them all, Dr. London, took upon him to do it.

Then he asked me again by my oath, where master

Garret was, and whither I had conveyed him? I told him I had not conveyed him, nor yet wist where he was, nor whither he was gone, except he were gone to Woodstock, as I had before said, as he showed me he would. Then he asked me again, when he came to me, how he came to me, what and how long he talked with me, and whither he went from me? I told him as before. All this the scribe wrote in a paper book.

Then they earnestly required me to tell them whither I had conveyed him, for surely, they said, I brought him going somewhither this morning, for that they might well perceive by my foul shoes and dirty hose, that I had travelled with him the most part of this night. I answered plainly that I lay at Alborne Hall with sir Fitzjames, and that I had good witness thereof there. They asked me where I was at evensong. I told them at Frideswides, and that I saw first master commissary, and then master doctor London come thither at that time unto master dean of Frideswides, and that I saw them talking together in the church there. Doctor London and the dean threatened me, that if I would not tell the truth, where I had done him, or whither he was gone, I should surely be sent unto the Tower of London, and there be racked, and put into little ease. But master commissary prayed me with gentle words to tell him where he was, that he might have him again, and he would be my very great friend, and deliver me out of trouble straightway. I told him I could not tell where he was, nor whither he was become. Thus did they occupy and toss me almost two hours in the chapel, sometimes with threatenings and foul words, and then with fair words and fair promises flattering me. Then was he that brought master Garret unto my chamber brought before me, and caused to declare what master Garret said unto me at his coming to my chamber, but I said plainly I heard him say no such thing, for I thought my nay to be as good as his yea, seeing it was to rid and deliver my godly brother out of trouble and peril of his life.*

At the last, when they could get nothing of me whereby to hurt or accuse any man, or to know any thing of the which they sought, they all three together brought me up a long stairs into a great chamber over master commissary's

* This indefensible sophistry, so contrary to scripture, that the end or object justifies the means, is a doctrine of the church of Rome, and never was maintained or acted upon by any of the principal reformers.

chamber, wherein stood a great pair of very high stocks. Then master commissary asked me for my purse and girdle, took away my money and my knives, and then they put both my legs into the stocks, and so locked me fast in them; in which I sat, my feet being almost as high as my head, and so departed they, I think to their abominable mass, locking fast the chamber door, and leaving me alone. When all they were gone, then came unto my remembrance the worthy forewarning and godly declaration of that most constant martyr of God, master John Clark, my father in Christ, who well nigh two years before that, when I did earnestly desire him to grant me to be his scholar, and that I might go with him continually when and wheresoever he should teach or preach, the which he did daily, said unto me much after this sort, "Dalaber, you desire you know not what, and that you are, I fear me, unable to take upon you. For though now my preaching be sweet and pleasant unto you, because there is yet no persecution laid on you for it, yet the time will come, and that peradventure shortly, if ye continue to live godly therein, that God will lay on you the cross of persecution to try you withal, whether you can as pure gold abide the fire, or as stubble and dross be consumed therewith. For the Holy Ghost plainly affirmeth by St. Paul, that all who will to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Yea, you shall be called and judged a heretic, you shall be abhorred of the world, your own friends and kinsfolk will forsake you, and also hate you, and you shall be cast into prison, and no man shall dare to help or comfort you, and you shall be accused and brought before the bishops, to your reproach and shame, to the great sorrow of all your faithful friends and kinsfolk. Then will ye wish ye had never known this doctrine. Then will ye curse Clark, and wish that ye had never known him, because he hath brought you to all these troubles. Therefore, rather than that you should do this, leave off from meddling of this doctrine, and desire not to be and continue in my company."

At which words I was so grieved, that I fell down on my knees at his feet, and with abundance of tears, and sighs even from the very bottom of my heart, I earnestly besought him, that for the tender mercy of God showed unto us in our Lord Jesus Christ, he would not refuse me, but receive me into his company, as I had desired; saying that I trusted verily, that He who had begun this in me,

would not forsake me, but would give me grace to continue therein unto the end. When he heard me say so, he came to me, and took me up in his arms, kissed me, the tears trickling down from his eyes, and said unto me, "The Lord almighty grant you so to do, and from henceforth for ever take me for your father, and I will take you for my son in Christ." Now were there at this time in Oxford, divers graduates and scholars of sundry colleges and halls, whom God had called to the knowledge of his holy word, who all resorted unto master Clark's disputations and lectures in divinity, at all times as they might; and when they might not come conveniently, I was by master Clark appointed to resort to every one of them weekly, and to know what doubts they had in any place of the scriptures, that by me from him they might have the true understanding of the same; which exercise did me most good and profit, to the understanding of the holy scriptures, which I most desired.

This aforesaid forewarning and godly declaration, I say, of this most godly martyr of God, master Clark, coming to my remembrance, caused me with deep sighs to cry unto God from my heart, to assist me with his Holy Spirit, that I might be able patiently and quietly to bear and suffer whatsoever it should please him of his fatherly love to lay on me, to his glory and the comfort of my dearly beloved brethren, whom I thought now to be in great fear and anguish, lest I would be an accuser of them all, for unto me they all were well known, and all their doings, in that matter. But, God be blessed, I was fully bent never to accuse any of them, whatsoever should happen of me. Before dinner master Cotisford came up to me, and requested me earnestly to tell him where master Garret was, and if I would so do, he promised me straightways to deliver me out of prison. But I told him I could not tell where he was; no more indeed I could. Then he departed to dinner, asking me if I would eat any meat, and I told him, Yea, right gladly. He said he would send me some. When he was gone, his servants asked me divers questions, which I do not now remember, and some of them spake me fair, and some threatened me, calling me heretic, and so departed, locking the door fast upon me.—

Fox adds, Thus far Anthony Dalaber prosecuted this story, who before the finishing, departed this life in the year 1562 in the diocese of Salisbury; the residue thereof as we

could gather it of ancient and credible persons, so have we added here unto the same.

After this, Garret was apprehended or taken by master Cole, the proctor, or his men, going westward, at a place called Hinksey, a little beyond Oxford, and so being brought back again, was committed to ward. That done, he was convented before the commissary, Dr. London, and Dr. Higdon, dean of Frideswides, now called Christ's college, at St. Mary's church, where they, sitting in judgment, convicted him according to their law as a heretic, as they said, and afterwards compelled him to carry a fagot in open procession from St. Mary's church to Frideswides, and Dalaber likewise with him, Garret having his red hood on his shoulders like a master of arts. After that, they were sent to Osney, there to be kept in prison till further orders.

There were suspected besides, a great number to be infected with heresy, as they called it, for having such books of God's truth, as Garret sold unto them; as master Clark, who died in his chamber, and could not be suffered to receive the communion. Being in prison, he said these words, Believe, and thou hast eaten. Divers others there were, (Fox enumerates many of them,) who were forced and constrained to forsake their colleges, and sought their friends. Against the procession time there was a great fire made upon the top of Carfax, whereunto all such as were in the said procession, either convicted or suspected of heresy, were commanded in token of repentance and renouncing of their errors, every man to cast a book into the fire as they passed by.

After this, master Garret, flying from place to place, escaped their tyranny until that he was again apprehended and burned with Dr. Barnes, with whom also W. Hierom, sometime vicar of Stepney, was likewise drawn to Smithfield, and there, together with them, constantly endured martyrdom in the fire.*

* "When at the stake he (Garret) cleared himself from having preached contrary to God's word, and concluded by saying, "Now I yield up my soul unto almighty God, trusting and believing that he of his infinite mercy, for his promise made in the blood of his Son our most merciful Saviour Jesus Christ, will take it, and pardon me of all my sins, whereby I have most grievously from my youth offended his majesty; wherefore I ask him mercy, desiring you all to pray with me, and for me, that I may patiently suffer this pain, and die stedfastly in true faith, perfect hope, and charity."—*Fox.*

A

BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF

THOMAS BILNEY;

TO WHICH ARE SUBJOINED HIS LETTERS TO

BISHOP TONSTAL.

Thomas Bilney was brought up in the university of Cambridge from an early age. He made considerable proficiency in study, particularly in the civil and canon law. But, as Fox expresses it, "Having gotten a better schoolmaster, even the Holy Spirit of Christ, who endued his heart by secret inspiration, with the knowledge of better and more wholesome things, he came at the last unto this point, that forsaking the knowledge of man's laws, he converted his study to those things which tended more to godliness than gain."

He was anxious to teach others the truths he had learned. Among other seals to his ministry was that faithful servant of Christ Hugh Latimer. In the Acts and Monuments of John Fox, the reader will find a particular account of the life and martyrdom of Bilney; in these pages only a brief notice can be inserted, as an introduction to the small, yet important written remains of this martyr, which have been preserved by the enemies of the truth.

Leaving the university, Bilney travelled into several parts of the country, accompanied by Thomas Arthur, another of the seals to his ministry. The scriptural doctrines he taught were frequently attacked by the Romanists and were powerfully defended by him. One memorial of these controversies has been preserved by his opponent, a friar Brusierd of Ipswich, who wrote down their conference to make it a ground of accusation against Bilney. We cannot suppose that this singular document does full justice to

the reformer, but it contains sufficient proof of the scriptural origin of the doctrines he taught, while it shows the fallacies advanced by the popish advocate.

The friar objected to Bilney, "Whereas you have said that none of the saints make intercession for us, nor obtain for us any thing, you have blasphemed the efficacy (power) of the church, consecrated with the precious blood of Christ; which, nevertheless, you are not able to deny, seeing they (the church) incessantly knock at the gates of heaven, through the continual intercession of the saints, as is plainly set forth in the seven-fold Litany."

Bilney referred to the text, "There is but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;" and asked, "If there be but one Mediator between God and man, even Christ Jesus, where is our blessed lady? where is St. Peter, and the other saints?"

The friar admitted that such was the doctrine of the primitive church, and that St. Paul was right in making such a statement, "when as yet there was no saint canonized, nor put into the calendar!" But "now the church assuredly knew and believed, that the blessed virgin, and the other saints, were placed in the bosom of Abraham; and that the church, like a good mother, diligently taught her children to praise the omnipotent Jesus in his saints, and also to offer up by the same saints our petitions to God!"

To this sophistical argument, Bilney replied, by quoting the words of our Saviour, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father, in my name, he will give it unto you;" adding, "He saith not, Whatsoever ye ask the Father in the name of St. Peter, St. Paul, and other saints; but *in my name.* Let us, then, ask help in the name of Him who is able to obtain for us of the Father whatsoever we ask; lest, at the day of judgment, we should hear him say, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name." The friar could not evade the force of this reasoning, but endeavoured to entangle Bilney in a scholastic argument, and a discussion respecting the authority of the church of Rome. Bilney, however, was too well informed to be so caught; and again referred to scripture, inquiring if the friar knew the ten commandments. His answer deserves notice: "According as the catholic doctors do expound them, I know them." The remainder of their conference was very similar to what is already given.

As Fox states, "The whole sum of Bilney's preaching

and doctrine proceeded chiefly against idolatry, invocation of saints, vain worship of images, false trust to men's merits, and such other gross points of religion, as seemed prejudicial and derogatory to the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ. As touching the mass and sacrament of the altar, he never differed thereon from the grossest (Roman) catholics."

In November, 1527, Bilney and Arthur were apprehended by command of cardinal Wolsey, who after a short examination committed their further examination to Tonstal, bishop of London, a decided Romanist, though milder than his brethren in his proceedings against the protestants.* Fox gives the particulars of their examinations from the bishop's own register, wherein Tonstal, with scrupulous fidelity, caused several letters written to him by Bilney to be inserted. Fox states,

"The third day of December, the bishop of London with the other bishops, assembling at the house of the bishop of Norwich, after that Bilney had denied utterly to return to the church of Rome, the bishop of London in discharge of his conscience, as he said, lest he should hide any thing that had come to his hands, exhibited unto the notaries, in the presence of Bilney, five letters or epistles, with a schedule in one of the epistles,† containing his articles and answers folded therein, and another epistle folded in manner of a book, with six leaves; which all and every one he commanded to be written out and registered, and the originals to be delivered to him again. This was done in the presence of Bilney, desiring a copy of them; and the bishop bound the notaries with an oath, for the safe keeping of the copies, and true registering of the same. Which articles and answers, with three of the same epistles, with certain depositions deposed by the aforesaid witness, here follow, truly drawn out, partly of his own hand-writing, and partly out of the register."

A brief account of some of the depositions against Bilney will present awful proofs of the spiritual darkness which then prevailed, and shows the blindness in which the church of Rome sought to retain its votaries.

It was deposed, that in his sermon in Christ's church in Ipswich, Bilney preached and said, Our Saviour Christ is our Mediator between us and the Father. What should we

* See the life of Bernard Gilpin in the Christian Biography.

† Only three of these letters are printed by Fox.

need then to seek any saint for remedy? Wherefore, it is great injury to the blood of Christ, to make such petitions, and blasphemeth our Saviour.

That man is so unperfect of himself, that he can in no wise merit by his own deeds.

Also, that the coming of Christ was long prophesied before, and desired by the prophets. But John Baptist being more than a prophet, did not only prophesy, but with his finger showed him, saying, Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Then if this were the very Lamb which John did demonstrate, that taketh away the sins of the world, what an injury is it to our Saviour Christ, to say that to be buried in St. Francis's cowl,* should remit four parts of penance: what is then left to our Saviour Christ, which taketh away the sins of the world? This I will justify to be a great blasphemy to the blood of Christ.

Also, that it was a great folly to go on pilgrimage, and that preachers in times past have been antichrists, and now it hath pleased God somewhat to show forth their falsehood and errors.

Also, that the miracles done at Walsingham, at Canterbury, and there in Ipswich, were done by the devil, through the sufferance of God, to blind the poor people; and that the pope hath not the keys that Peter had, except he follow Peter in his living.

Moreover, it was deposed against him, that he was notoriously suspected as a heretic, and twice pulled out of the pulpit in the diocese of Norwich.

Also it was deposed against him, that he should in the parish church of Willesdon, exhort the people to put away their gods of silver and gold, and leave their offerings unto them, for that such things as they offered have been known oftentimes afterward to have been given to harlots. Also that Jews and Saracens would have become christian men long ago, had it not been for the idolatry of christian men in offering of candles, wax, and money, to stocks and stones.

Tonstal was particularly desirous not to proceed to

* To be buried in a friar's cast-off habit, accompanied by letters, enrolling the deceased in a monastic order, was accounted a sure deliverance from eternal condemnation! In Piers the Ploughman's creed a friar is described as wheedling a poor man out of his money, by assuring him that if he will contribute to his monastery,

> St. Francis himself shall fold thee in his cope,
> And present thee to the Trinity, and pray for thy sins.

King John was buried in a monk's cowl! See note, p. 158.

extremities with Bilney. He repeatedly remanded him to give time for reflection, and even after reading a part of the sentence deferred the remainder. These continued attacks upon the constancy of Bilney were seconded by several friends of the reformer, and probably were of greater efficacy than severer measures. We find that at length he recanted; he was released after carrying a fagot in a Romish procession, and standing bareheaded before the preacher at Paul's cross, during the sermon. In this recantation he admitted the worship of saints, and prayer to them, also that men could merit by their deeds.

Bilney returned to Cambridge after his abjuration, deeply lamenting and sorrowing for his weakness. He was almost brought into a state of utter desperation, as Latimer described in his sermons.* He relates that Bilney's agony of mind was so great, "that his friends dared not suffer him to be alone day or night. They comforted him as they could, but no comforts would serve. And as for the comfortable places of scripture, to bring them to him was as though a man should run him through the heart with a sword."

Fox, or rather archbishop Parker,† whose narrative of Bilney's martyrdom he inserts, proceeds thus:—

By this it appears how vehemently this good man was pierced with sorrow and remorse for his abjuration, the space almost of two years, that is, from the year 1529, to the year 1531. It followed then, that by God's grace and good counsel he came at length to some quiet of conscience, being fully resolved to give his life for the confession of that truth, which before he had renounced. And thus being fully determined in his mind, and setting his time, he took his leave in Trinity Hall at ten of the clock at night, of certain of his friends, and said that he would go to Jerusalem; alluding belike to the words and example of Christ in the gospel, going up to Jerusalem,‡ what time he was appointed to suffer his passion. And so Bilney, meaning to

* See Latimer, p. 56, 115, 260.

† Archbishop Parker, then resident at the university, went from Cambridge to Norwich to witness the martyrdom of Bilney, for whom he entertained a warm affection. He was thus enabled to bear testimony to the faithful adherence of the martyr to the truth during his last moments, in contradiction to the assertions of sir Thomas More, who falsely declared that Bilney had recanted at the stake. A particular statement respecting this is given by Fox, supported by several undoubted testimonies.

‡ Or probably to the words of St. Paul, Acts xix. 21. xx. 22.

give over his life for the testimony of Christ's gospel, told his friends that he would go up to Jerusalem, and so would see them no more, and immediately departed to Norfolk, and there preached, first privately in households to confirm the brethren and sisters, and also to confirm the anchoress* whom he had converted to Christ. Then preached he openly in the fields, confessing his fact, and preaching publicly that doctrine which he before had abjured, to be the very truth, and willed all men to beware by him, and never to trust to their fleshly friends in causes of religion. And so setting forward in his journey toward the celestial Jerusalem, he departed from thence to the anchoress in Norwich, and there gave her a new testament of Tindal's translation, and The Obedience of a Christian Man; whereupon he was apprehended and carried to prison, there to remain, till the blind bishop Nix† sent up for a writ to burn him.

In the mean season, the friars and religious men, with the residue of their doctors, civil and canon, resorted to him, busily labouring to persuade him not to die in those opinions, saying, he should be damned body and soul, if he so continued. Among whom, first were sent to him of the bishop, doctor Call, minister, as they call him, or provincial of the Gray Friars: and doctor Stokes, an Augustine friar, who lay with him in prison in disputation, till the writ came that he should be burned. Doctor Call, by the word of God, through the means of Bilney's doctrine, and good life, whereof he had good experience, was somewhat reclaimed to the gospel's side.

The order of his martyrdom was this, as follows:—

Thomas Bilney, after his examination and condemnation, was degraded, according to the popish custom, by the assistance of all the friars and doctors of the same suit. Which done, he was immediately committed to the lay power, and to the two sheriffs of the city, of whom Thomas Necton was one. This Thomas Necton was Bilney's special good friend, and sorry to accept him to such execution

* A sort of nun, or female hermit.

† Nix, bishop of Norwich, was a bitter persecutor, and ever ready to send the followers of the truth to the fire, telling them when brought before him, that they smelt of the frying-pan. He endeavoured to prevent the circulation of the reformers' books, especially Tindal's new testament, "which he could not endure to be read." At this time he was fourscore years of age, infirm and blind, "blind both in body and soul."

as followed. But such was the tyranny of that time, and the dread of the chancellor and friars, that he could no otherwise do, but needs must receive him ;* who notwithstanding, as he could not bear in his conscience himself to be present at his death: so, for the time that he was in his custody, he caused him to be more friendly looked unto, and more wholesomely kept, concerning his diet, than he was before.

After this, the Friday following, at night, which was before the day of his execution, being St. Magnus day and Saturday, the said Bilney had divers of his friends resorting unto him in the guildhall, where he was kept. Amongst whom one of the said friends finding him eating of an ale-brew† with such a cheerful heart and quiet mind as he did, said that he was glad to see him at that time, so shortly before his heavy and painful departure, so heartily to refresh himself. Whereunto he answered, " I follow the example of the husbandmen of the country, who having a ruinous house to dwell in, yet bestow cost as long as they may, to hold it up; and so do I now with this ruinous house of my body, and with God's creatures, in thanks to him, refresh the same as ye see." Then sitting with his said friends in godly talk, to their edification, some put him in mind, that though the fire which he should suffer the next day, should be of great heat unto his body, yet the comfort of God's Spirit should cool it to his everlasting refreshing. At this word Bilney putting his hand toward the flame of the candle burning before them (as also he did divers times besides) and feeling the heat thereof, said, " I feel by experience, and have known it long by philosophy, that fire, by God's ordinance is naturally hot; but yet I am persuaded by God's holy word, and by the experience of some spoken of in the same, that in the flame they felt no heat, and in the fire they felt no consumption: and I constantly believe, that howsoever the stubble of this my body shall be wasted by it, yet my soul and spirit shall be purged thereby: a pain for the time, whereon notwithstanding followeth joy unspeakable." And then he much treated of this place of scripture: " Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, and called

* Master More being lord chancellor, when the message was sent to him for a writ of discharge to burn Bilney, speaks in this wise to the messengers that came: " Go your ways, and burn him first, and then afterward come to me for a bill of my hand."—*Fox.*

† Or posset.

thee by thy name, thou art mine own. When thou goest through the water, I will be with thee, and the strong floods shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest in the fire it shall not burn thee, and the flame shall not kindle upon thee, for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel," Isaiah xliii. Which he did most comfortably entreat of, as well in respect of himself, as applying it to the particular use of his friends there present, of whom some took such sweet fruit therein that they caused the whole said sentence to be fairly written in tables, and some in their books. The comfort whereof, in divers of them, was never taken from them to their dying day.

The Saturday next following, when the officers of execution, as the manner is, with their gleaves and halberds were ready to receive him, and to lead him to the place of execution without the city gate, called Bishop's gate, in a low valley, commonly called the Lollard's pit, under St. Leonard's hill, environed about with great hills—which place was chosen for the people's quiet sitting to see the execution—at the coming forth of Bilney out of the prison door, one of his friends came to him, and with few words, as he durst, spake to him, and prayed him in God's behalf to be constant, and to take his death as patiently as he could. Whereunto the said Bilney answered, with a quiet and mild countenance: "Ye see when the mariner is entered his ship to sail on the troublous sea, how he for a while is tossed in the billows of the same; but yet in hope that he shall once come to the quiet haven, he beareth in better comfort the perils which he feeleth: so am I now toward this sailing, and whatsoever storms I shall feel, yet shortly after shall my ship be in the haven; as I doubt not thereof by the grace of God, desiring you to help me with your prayers to the same effect."

And so he going forth in the streets, giving much alms by the way by the hands of one of his friends, and accompanied with one doctor Warner, doctor of divinity, and parson of Winterton, whom he did choose as his old acquaintance, to be with him for his spiritual comfort; came at the last to the place of execution, and descended down from the hill to the same, apparelled in a layman's gown, with his sleeves hanging down, and his arms out, his hair being piteously mangled at his degradation; a little single* body in person, but always of a good upright countenance, and drew near to

* Slight.

the stake prepared; and somewhat tarrying the preparation of the fire, he desired that he might speak some words to the people, and there standing, thus he said:

"Good people, I am come hither to die, and born I was to live under that condition, naturally to die again; and that ye might testify that I depart out of this present life as a true christian man, in a right belief towards almighty God, I will rehearse unto you in a fast faith, the articles of my creed." He then began to rehearse them in order as they are in the common creed, often elevating his eyes and hands to almighty God; and at the article of Christ's incarnation, having a little meditation in himself, and coming to the word, crucified, he humbly bowed himself and made great reverence; and so he proceeded on, without any manner of words of recantation, or charging any man for procuring him to his death.

This once done, he put off his gown, and went to the stake, and kneeling upon a little ledge coming out of the stake, whereon he should afterward stand to be better seen, he made his private prayer with such earnest elevation of his eyes and hands to heaven, and in so good quiet behaviour, that he seemed not much to consider the terror of his death, and ended at the last his private prayers with the cxliii psalm, beginning, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, consider my desire:" and the next verse he repeated in deep meditation, thrice, "And enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified:" and so finishing that psalm, he ended his private prayers.

After that, he turned himself to the officers, asking them if they were ready, and they answered, Yea. Whereupon he put off his jacket and doublet, and stood in his hose and shirt, and went unto the stake, standing upon that ledge, and the chain was cast about him; and standing thereon, the said doctor Warner came to him to bid him farewell, who spake but few words for weeping.

Upon whom the said Thomas Bilney did most gently smile, and inclined his body to speak to him a few words of thanks, and the last were these: "O master doctor, "Feed your flock, feed your flock, that when the Lord cometh he may find you so doing: and farewell, good master doctor, and pray for me;" and so he departed without any answer, sobbing and weeping.

And while he thus stood upon the ledge at the stake,

certain friars, doctors, and priors of their houses, being there present, as they were uncharitably and maliciously present at his examination and degradation, &c. came to him, and said, " O master Bilney, the people are persuaded that we are the causers of your death, and that we have procured the same, and thereupon it is like that they will withdraw their charitable alms from us all, except you declare your charity towards us, and discharge us of the matter." Whereupon the said Thomas Bilney spake with a loud voice to the people, and said, " I pray you, good people, be never the worse to these men for my sake, as though they should be the authors of my death; it was not they." And so he ended.

Then the officers put reeds and fagots about his body and set fire on the reeds, which made a very great flame that sparkled and deformed the visor of his face, he holding up his hands, and knocking upon his breast, crying sometimes " Jesus," sometimes " I believe." Which flame was blown away from him by the violence of the wind, which was that day, and two or three days before, notably great, in which it was said that the fields were marvellously plagued by the loss of corn: and so for a little pause he stood without flame, the flame departing and recoursing thrice ere the wood took strength to be the sharper to consume him: and then he gave up the ghost, and his body being withered, bowed downward upon the chain. Then one of the officers, with his halberd, smote out the staple in the stake behind him, and suffered his body to fall into the bottom of the fire, laying wood on it, and so he was consumed.*

* From Bilney's first letter to bishop Tonstal, it will be seen that his conversion was rather by the direct influences of the Holy Spirit, opening his mind to study the scriptures, than by any human instruction as means. Several articles exhibited against him indicate a greater similarity in his tenets to those of the followers of Wickliff, than to the German reformers, we may therefore class him with the former, although he differed from them in some respects.

BILNEY'S LETTERS

TO

BISHOP TONSTAL.

To the reverend father in Christ, Cuthbert, bishop of London, Thomas Bilney wisheth health in Christ, with all submission due unto such a prelate.

In this respect, most reverend father in Christ, I think myself most happy, that it is my lot to be called to examination before your reverence, for that you are of such wisdom and learning, of such integrity of life, which all men do confess to be in you, that even yourself cannot choose, if you do not too lightly esteem God's gifts in you, as often as you shall remember the great things which God hath done unto you, but straightways secretly in your heart, to his high praise, say, "He that is mighty hath done great things unto me, and holy is his name!" I rejoice that I have now happened upon such a judge, and with all my heart give thanks unto God, which ruleth all things.

And albeit, God is my witness, I know not myself guilty of any error in my sermons, neither of any heresy or sedition, which divers slander me of, seeking rather their own lucre and advantage, than the health of souls. Notwithstanding I do exceedingly rejoice, that it is foreseen by God's divine providence, that I should be brought before the tribunal seat of Tonstal, who knoweth as well as any other, that there will never be wanting Jannes and Jambres, who will resist the truth: that there shall never be lacking some Elymas, who will go about to subvert the straight ways of the Lord: and, finally, that some Demetrius, Pythoness, (Acts ix.) Balaams, Nicolaitanes, Cains, and Ishmaels, will be always at hand, who will greedily hunt and seek after that which pertaineth unto themselves, and not that which pertaineth to Jesus Christ. How can it then be that they can suffer Christ to be truly and sincerely preached? For if the people begin once wholly in every place, to put their confidence in Christ, who was crucified for them, then straightways that which they have hitherto embraced instead of Christ, shall utterly decay in the hearts of the faithful. Then they shall understand that Christ is not in this place, or in that place, but the kingdom of

God is in themselves. Then shall they plainly see that the Father is to be worshipped, neither in the mount of Samaria, neither at Jerusalem, but in all places, in spirit and truth. Which if it come once to pass, the beasts of the field will think all their gain and lucre lost. In whom the saying of Ezekiel is fulfilled, "My sheep are dispersed because they had no shepherd, and are devoured of the beasts of the field, and strayed abroad; my flock hath erred and wandered in every mountain, and upon every high hill, and is dispersed throughout all the earth, and there is no man which hath sought to gather them together: no, there was no man which once sought after them." But if any man would seek to reduce those which were gone astray, into the fold of Christ, that is, the unity of faith: speedily there rise up certain against him, which are named pastors; but indeed are wolves, who seek nothing of their flock, but the milk, wool, and fell, leaving both their own souls, and the souls of their flock, unto the devil.

These men, I say, rise up like unto Demetrius, crying out, This heretic dissuadeth and seduceth much people every where, saying, That they are not gods, which are made with hands. These are they, these, I say, most reverend father, are they, who, under the pretence of persecuting heretics, follow their own licentious life; enemies unto the cross of Christ, who can suffer and bear anything, rather than the sincere preaching of Christ crucified for our sins. These are they unto whom Christ threateneth eternal damnation, where he saith, Woe be unto you, scribes, pharisees, and hypocrites, which shut up the kingdom of heaven before men, and you yourselves enter not in, neither suffer those which would enter, to come in. These are they which have come in another way, to the charge of souls, as it appeareth, For if any man, saith Christ, come in by me, he shall be saved, and shall come in and go out, and find pasture. These men do not find pasture, for they never teach, and draw others after them, that they should not enter by Christ, who alone is the door whereby we must come unto the Father; but they set before the people another way, persuading them to come unto God through good works, oftentimes speaking nothing at all of Christ, thereby seeking rather their own gain and lucre, than the salvation of souls; in this point being worse than they which upon Christ, being the foundation, do build wood, hay, and straw. These men confess that they know Christ, but by their deeds they deny him.

These are those physicians, upon whom that woman which was twelve years vexed, had consumed all that she had, and felt no help, but was still worse and worse, until such time as at the last, she came unto Christ, and after she had once touched the hem of his vesture through faith, she was so healed, that presently she felt the same in her body. Oh mighty power of the Most Highest! which I also, miserable sinner, have often tasted and felt. Who before that I could come unto Christ, had even likewise spent all that I had upon those ignorant physicians, that is to say, unlearned hearers of confession, so that there was but small force of strength left in me, which of nature was but weak, small store of money, and very little knowledge or understanding; for they appointed me fastings, watching, buying of pardons, and masses: in all which things, as I now understand, they sought rather their own gain, than the salvation of my sick and languishing soul.

But at the last I heard speak of Jesus, even then when the New Testament was first set forth by Erasmus. Which when I understood to be eloquently done by him, being allured rather for the Latin, than for the word of God, for at that time I knew not what it meant; I bought it even by the providence of God, as I do now well understand and perceive. And at the first reading, as I well remember, I chanced upon this sentence of St. Paul, (Oh most sweet and comfortable sentence to my soul! in his first epistle to Timothy, and first chapter,) It is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be embraced, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief and principal. This one sentence, through God's instruction and inward working, which I did not then perceive, did so exhilarate my heart, being before wounded with the guilt of my sins, and being almost in despair, that immediately I felt a marvellous comfort and quietness, insomuch that my bruised bones leapt for joy, Psal. l.

After this, the scripture began to be more pleasant unto me than the honey or the honeycomb; wherein I learned that all my labours, all my fasting and watching, all the redemption of masses and pardons, being done without truth in Christ, who alone saveth his people from their sins; these, I say, I learned to be nothing else but even, as St. Augustine saith, a hasty and swift running out of the right way, or else much like to the vesture made of fig leaves, wherewithal Adam and Eve went about in vain, to cover

themselves, and could never before obtain quietness and rest, until they believed in the promise of God, that Christ, the Seed of the woman, should tread upon the serpent's head. Neither could I be relieved or eased of the sharp stings and bitings of my sins, before that I was taught of God that lesson which Christ speaketh of in the third chapter of John, Even as Moses exalted the serpent in the desert, so shall the Son of man be exalted, that all which believe on him should not perish, but have life everlasting.

As soon as, according to the measure of grace given unto me of God, I began to taste and savour of this heavenly lesson, which no man can teach but only God, who revealed the same unto Peter, I desired the Lord to increase my faith; and at last, I desired nothing more, than that I, being so comforted by him, might be strengthened by his Holy Spirit and grace from above, that I might teach the wicked his ways, which are mercy and truth, and that the wicked might be converted unto him by me, who sometime was also wicked. Which thing, whilst that with all my power I did endeavour before my lord cardinal and your fatherhood, Christ was blasphemed in me, and this is my only comfort in these my afflictions, whom with my whole power I do teach and set forth, being made for us by God his Father, our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and finally, our satisfaction. Who was made sin for us, (that is to say, a sacrifice for sin,) that we, through him, should be made the righteousness of God. Who became accursed for us, to redeem us from the curse of the law; who also came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The righteous, I say, which falsely judge and think themselves so to be, for all men have sinned and lack the glory of God; whereby he freely forgiveth sins unto all believers, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, because that all mankind was grievously wounded in him which fell among thieves between Jerusalem and Jericho. 1 Cor. i. 2 Cor. v. Gal. ii. Matt. ix. Rom. iii.

And therefore with all my whole power I teach, that all men should first acknowledge their sins and condemn them, and afterwards hunger and thirst for that righteousness, whereof St. Paul speaketh: The righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ, is upon all them which believe in him, for there is no difference, all have sinned, and lack the glory of God; and are justified freely through his grace, by the redemption which is in Jesus Christ, Rom. iii. The

which, whosoever doth hunger or thirst for, without doubt, they shall at the length so be satisfied, that they shall not hunger and thirst for ever.

But, forsomuch as this hunger and thirst was wont to be quenched with the fulness of man's righteousness, which is wrought through the faith of our own elect and chosen works, as pilgrimages, buying of pardons, offering of candles, fasts chosen, and oftentimes superstitious, and finally all kind of voluntary devotions, as they call them, against the which God's word speaketh plainly in the fourth of Deuteronomy and in the twelfth, saying, Thou shalt not do that which seemeth good unto thyself, but that which I command thee for to do, that do thou, neither adding to, neither diminishing any thing from it; therefore, I say, oftentimes have I spoken of those works, not condemning them, as I take God to be my witness, but reproving their abuse, making the lawful use of them manifest, even unto children, exhorting all men not so to cleave unto them, that they being satisfied therewith, should loath or wax weary of Christ, as many do. In whom I bid your fatherhood most prosperously well to fare.

And this is the whole sum.—If you will appoint me to dilate more at large on the things here touched, I will not refuse to do it, so that you will grant me time. For to do it out of hand I am not able, for the weakness of my body; being ready always if I have erred in any thing, to be better instructed.

THOMAS BILNEY.

Another letter or epistle of master Bilney to Cuthbert Tonstal, bishop of London.

ALBEIT I do not remember, reverend father in Christ, whether I have either spoken or written that the gospel hath not been sincerely preached now of long time, which your lordship seemeth to have gathered either by some sinister hearers of my sermons, (who like Malchus, having their right ear cut off, Matt. xxvi. only bring their left ear to sermons) or else by some words or writings of mine, which have rashly passed me, rather than upon any evil intent. Yet, forsomuch as in this behalf, your reverence doth command me, and that of a good mind I trust, (for how can I think that in Tonstal any craft or doubleness to

dwell!) I will briefly declare unto you what I have learned of God through Christ, in the scriptures, and how that the doctors, even of great name and renown, have not taught the same of late in their sermons; referring, or rather submitting all things unto your fatherly judgment, which is more quick and sharp, than that it can by any means be blinded, and so sincere, that it will not in any point seek slander or discord. Therefore, I do confess that I have often been afraid that Christ hath not been purely preached now a long time. For who hath been now a long season offended through him? Who hath now these many years suffered any persecution for the gospel's sake? Where is the sword which he came to send upon the earth? And, finally, where are the rest of the sincere and uncorrupt fruits of the gospel? which, because we have not a long time seen, is it not to be feared that the tree which bringeth forth those fruits hath now a long time been wanting in our region or country? much less is it to be believed that it hath been nourished amongst us. Have we not seen all things quiet and peaceable a long time? But what saith the church? My grief most bitter, is turned to peace, &c. Isa. xxxviii. But the malignant church saith, Peace, peace, and there is no peace, Jer. vi. but only that whereof it is written, When the mighty armed man keepeth his gates, he possesseth all things in quiet, Luke xi. But when he seeth that he shall be vanquished of a stronger than he himself is, he spoileth and destroyeth all things. What now-a-days beginneth again to be attempted, I dare not say. God grant us grace that we do not refuse and reject, if it be Christ, him that cometh unto us, lest that we do feel that terrible judgment against us; Because, saith he, they have not received the love of truth, that they might be saved; therefore God will send upon them the blindness of error, that they shall give credit unto lies, 2 Thess. ii. Oh terrible sentence, which God knoweth whether a great number have not already incurred; that all they might be judged which have not given credit unto the truth, but consented unto iniquity. The time shall come, saith he, when that they will not suffer the true doctrine to be preached. And what shall we then say of that learning, which hath now so long time reigned and triumphed, so that no man hath once opened his mouth against it? Shall we think it sound doctrine? Truly iniquity did never more abound, nor was charity ever so cold. And what should

we say to be the cause thereof? Hath the cause been for lack of preaching against the vices of men, and exhorting to charity? That cannot be, for many learned and great clerks sufficiently can witness to the contrary. And yet, all these notwithstanding, we see the life and manners of men do greatly degenerate from true christianity, and seem to cry out indeed, that it is fulfilled in us, which God in times past threatened by his prophet Amos, saying, Behold, the day shall come, saith the Lord, that I will send hunger upon the earth, not hunger of bread, neither thirst of water, but of hearing the word of God; and the people shall be moved from sea to sea, and from the west unto the east, and shall run about seeking for the word of God, but shall not find it. In those days the fair virgins and young men shall perish for thirst, &c. But now, to pass over many things, whereby I am moved to fear, that the word of God hath not been purely preached; this is not the least argument—that they which come and are sent, and endeavour themselves to preach Christ truly, are evil spoken of for his name, which is the rock of offence, and stumbling block unto them which stumble upon his word, and do not believe on him, on whom they are builded.

But you will ask, Who are those men, and what is their doctrine? Truly I say, whosoever entereth in by the door Christ, into the sheepfold which all such shall do as seek nothing else but the glory of God, and salvation of souls; of all such it may be truly said, that whom the Lord sendeth, he speaketh the word of God. And why so? Because he representeth the angel of the church of Philadelphia, unto whom St. John writeth, saying; This saith He, which is holy and true, which hath the keys of David, which openeth and no man shutteth, shutteth and no man openeth, Rev. iii. Behold, saith he, speaking in the name of Christ, who is the door and doorkeeper, I have set before thee an open door, that is to say, of the scriptures opening thy senses, that thou shouldst understand the scriptures, and that, because thou hast entered in by me which am the door. For whosoever entereth in by me which am the door, shall be saved; he shall go in and come out and find pasture; for the doorkeeper openeth the door unto him, and the sheep hear his voice, John x. But contrariwise, they which have not entered in by the door, but have climbed in some other way, by ambition, avarice, or desire of rule, they shall even in a moment go down into hell,

except they repent. And of them is the saying of Jeremiah verified: All beauty is gone away from the daughter of Sion, because her princes are become like rams, not finding pasture, Lam. i. And why so? Because like thieves and robbers they have climbed up another way, not being called nor sent. And what marvel is it, if they do not preach, when they are not sent, but run for lucre, seeking their own glory, and not the glory of God, and salvation of souls? And this is the root of all mischief in the church, that they are not sent inwardly of God. For without this inward calling, it helpeth nothing before God, to be a hundred times elect and consecrate, by a thousand bulls, either by pope, king, or emperor. God beholdeth the heart, whose judgments are according to truth, howsoever we deceive the judgment of men for a time; which also at the last shall see their abomination. This, I say, is the original of all mischief in the church, that we thrust in ourselves into the charge of souls, whose salvation, and the glory of God, which is to enter in by the door, we do not thirst or seek for, but altogether our own lucre and profit.

Hereupon it cometh, that we know not how to preach Christ purely. For how should they preach Christ, saith the apostle, except they be sent? for otherwise many thieves and robbers do preach him, but with their lips only, for their hearts are far from him. Neither yet do we suffer those which do know how to preach, but persecute them, and go about to oppress the scriptures now springing, under the pretence of godliness, fearing, as I suppose, lest the Romans should come and take our place. Ah thou wicked enemy Herod, why art thou afraid that Christ should come? He taketh not away mortal and earthly kingdoms, which giveth heavenly kingdoms. Oh blindness, Oh our great blindness, yea more than that of Egypt! of the which if there be any that would admonish the people, by and by saith Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron, why do ye cause the people to cease from their labours? and truly called their labours! Get you to your burdens. Lay more work upon them, and cause them to do it, that they hearken not unto lies. Thus the people were dispersed throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather up chaff—I say, to gather up chaff. Who shall grant unto us, that God shall say, I have looked down, and beholden the affliction of my people, which is in Egypt, and have heard their sighs, and am come down to deliver them? But whither hath this zeal carried me? whether after

knowledge or not, I dare not say; it appertaineth to you, reverend father, to judge thereupon.

Now you do look that I should show unto you at large, as you write, how that they ought sincerely to preach, to the better edifying hereafter of your flock. Here I confess I was afraid, that you had spoken in some derision, until that I well perceived, that you had written it with your own hand. Then again, I began to doubt for what intent Tonstal should require that of Bilney; an old soldier, of a young beginner; the chief pastor of London, of a poor silly sheep. But for what intent soever you did it, I trust it was of a good mind. And albeit that I am weak of body, yet through the grace of Christ given unto me, I will attempt this matter, although it does far pass my power; under the which burden, if I be oppressed, yet I will not deceive you, for I have promised nothing, but a prompt and ready will to do that which you have commanded.

As touching that which pertaineth to the preaching of the gospel, I would to God you would give me leave privately to talk with you, that I might speak freely that which I have learned in the holy scriptures, for the consolation of my conscience; which if you will so do, I trust you shall not repent you. All things shall be submitted unto your judgment; who, except I be utterly deceived, will not break the reed that is bruised, and put out the flax that is smoking; but rather, if I shall be found in any error, as indeed I am a man, you as spiritual, shall restore me through the spirit of gentleness, considering yourself, lest that you also be tempted. For every bishop which is taken from among men, is ordained for men, not violently to assault those which are ignorant and do err; for he himself is compassed with infirmity, that he, being not void of evils, should learn to have compassion upon other miserable people, Heb. v.

I desire you that you will remember me to-morrow, that by your aid, I may be brought before the tribunal seat of my lord cardinal; before whom I had rather stand, than before any of his deputies.

Yours, THOMAS BILNEY.

Another letter of master Bilney, fruitful and necessary for all ministers to read.

MOST reverend father, salutations in Christ. You have required me to write to you at large, wherein men have not

preached as they ought, and how they should have preached better. This is a burden too heavy for my strength; under the which if I shall faint, it belongeth to you who have laid this burden upon my shoulders, to ease me thereof. As touching the first part, they have not preached as they ought, who, leaving the word of God, have taught their own traditions; of which sort there are not a few, as it is very evident, in that they do report those which preach the word of God sincerely, to teach new doctrine. This also is no small testimony thereof, that in all England you shall scarce find one or two that are mighty in the scriptures; and what marvel is it if all godly things do seem new unto them unto whom the gospel is new and strange, being nurtured in men's traditions now a long time? Would to God these things were not true, which I utter unto you; but alas they are too true.

They have also preached evil, which either have wrested the scriptures themselves, or have rashly gathered them out of old rotten papers, being wrested by others. And how should it be but that they should wrest them; or else how should they judge them, being falsely interpreted by others, when they have not once read over the bible orderly? Of this sort there is truly a very great number, from which number many great rabbins or masters shall hardly excuse themselves, whom the people have hitherto reverenced instead of gods. And these are they who now serve their bellies, seeking their own glory, and not the true glory of God, which might be set forth even by Balaam's ass: much less then ought we to contemn such abjects as preach the word of God. We have, saith St. Paul, this treasure in brickle* vessels, that the glory of the power might be of God, and not of us. God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things God hath chosen to confound the mighty; and vile things of the world and despised, hath he chosen, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his sight, 1 Cor. i. But now all men in a manner will be wise, and therefore they are ashamed of the simple gospel; they are ashamed truly to say with Paul, and to perform it indeed; I brethren, when I came unto you, did not come with excellency of words, or of wisdom, preaching the testimony of Christ; for I esteemed not myself to know anything amongst you, but only Jesus Christ and him cru-

* Earthen, clay.

cified, 1 Cor. ii. Oh voice of a true evangelist! But now we are ashamed of this foolish preaching, by the which it hath pleased God to save all those which believe in him; and being puffed up with our own fleshly mind, choose rather proudly to walk in those things which we have not seen, preaching fables and lies, and not the law of God, which is undefiled, converting souls, Ps. xix.

But how should they teach the law of God, which they have not once read in the books, much less learned at the mouth of God? But in a pastor, and a bishop this is required; Thou son of man, saith God, lay up in thy heart all my words which I do speak unto thee, Ezek. iii., &c. And shortly after he saith, Thou son of man, I have ordained and given thee a watchman unto the house of Israel. I have given thee, saith he, not coming in by ambition, nor thrusting in thyself, nor climbing in another way, but I gave thee when thou lookedst not for it, that thou shouldst attend thereupon, and give warning from the top of the watch-tower, if any enemies should approach. I have given thee unto the house of Israel, and not the house of Israel unto thee, that thou shouldst acknowledge thyself to be the servant of the sheep, and not their lord. For I have not given the sheep for the shepherd, but the shepherd for the sheep. He that sitteth down is greater than he that doth minister and serve unto him. Which thing was well known of him who truly said, We are your servants for Christ's cause.

But for what purpose have I given thee unto the house of Israel? That thou shouldst only minister the sacraments, consecrate wood, stones, and church-yards? This, I take God to witness, with great sighs and groans I write unto you, pouring out before you the grief of my heart—No truly. What then? First, followeth the office of the bishop: Thou shalt hear the word out of my mouth. This is but a short lesson, but such as all the world cannot comprehend, without they be inwardly taught of God.

And what else meaneth this, Out of my mouth thou shalt hear the word, but that thou shalt be taught of God? Therefore, as many as are not taught of God, although they be ever so well exercised in the scriptures by man's help, yet are they not watchmen given by God, and much less they which do not understand and know the scriptures. And therefore such as these are, lest they should keep

silence and say nothing, are always harping upon the traditions and doctrines of men, that is, upon lies. For he that speaketh of himself, speaketh lies. Of these it is written: They would be doctors of the law, not understanding what they speak, neither of whom they speak, 1 Tim. i. Such of necessity they must all be, who speak that with their mouth which they do not believe, because they are not inwardly taught of God, neither are persuaded in their hearts that it is true; and therefore they are not to be accounted as sheep, although they boast themselves to be shepherds. But contrariwise, touching the true and learned pastors given by God, it may be truly said, We speak that which we know, and that which we have seen, 1 John i. even with the infallible eyes of our faith, we do witness; and these are neither deceived, neither do deceive. Moreover, the deceivers proceed to worse and worse, erring themselves, and bringing others also to error; and because they are of the world, the world doth willingly hear them. They are of the world, saith St. John, and therefore they speak those things which are of the world, and the world giveth ear unto them, 1 John iv.

Behold, reverend father, this is the touchstone of our daily preaching. Hath not the world given ear unto them now a long time with great pleasure and delight? But the flesh could never suffer the preaching of the cross, nor yet the wisdom of the flesh, which is enemy unto God, neither is subject unto his law, nor can be. And why then are they accused to be heretics and schismatics, who will not seek to please men, but only to their edifying? being mindful of that place of scripture; God hath dispersed the bones of them which please men, saying unto them, Speak unto us pleasant things, Isa. xxx. But now, letting these matters pass, we will come unto the second point, wherein you ask, how a man should preach better? Forsooth, if we had heard him of whom the Father spake, saying, This is my dearly beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear him. Who also, speaking of himself, said, it was meet that Christ should suffer and rise again the third day from death, and that in his name repentance and remission of sins should be preached unto all people. What other thing is that, than the same which the other evangelists do write? Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel unto every creature: he that believeth and is baptized, shall be

saved, Matt. xxviii. What can be more pleasant, sweet, or acceptable unto afflicted consciences, being almost in despair, than this most joyful tidings?

But here, whether Christ have been a long time heard I know not, for I have not heard all the preachers of England; and if I had heard them, yet till within this year or two, I could not sufficiently judge of them. But this I dare be bold to affirm, that as many as I have heard of late preach, I speak even of the most famous, they have preached such repentance, that if I had heard such preachers of repentance in times past, I should utterly have been in despair. And to speak of one of those famous men, not uttering his name, after he had sharply inveighed against vice, wherein he pleased every godly man, forasmuch as it could not be sufficiently cried out upon, he concluded, "Behold, thou hast lien rotten in thine own lusts, by the space of these sixty years, and wilt thou presume in one year, to go forward toward heaven, and that in thine age, as much as thou wentest backwards from heaven towards hell in sixty years?" Is not this, think you, a goodly argument? Is this the preaching of repentance in the name of Jesus? or rather is it not to tread down Christ with antichrist's doctrine? for what other thing did he speak in effect, than that Christ died in vain for thee? He will not be thy Jesus or Saviour, thou must make satisfaction for thyself, or else thou shalt perish eternally. Then doth St. John lie who saith; Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. And in another place; His blood hath cleansed us from all our sins. And again, He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Besides an infinite number of other places, what other thing is this, than that which was spoken by the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Peter, saying; There shall be false teachers that shall deny the Lord Jesus, which hath redeemed them? And what followeth upon such doctrine of devils speaking lies through hypocrisy? a conscience despairing and without all hope, and so given over unto all wicked lusts, according to the saying of St. Paul. After that they are come to this point that they sorrow no more, they give themselves over unto wantonness, to commit all kind of filthiness, even with a greedy desire. For, seeing that it is impossible for them to make satisfaction to God, either they murmur against God, or else they do not believe him to be so cruel as they do preach and declare him to be. The want of paper will not suffer me to write

any more, and I had rather to speak it in private talk unto yourself. Whereunto if you would admit me, I trust you should not repent you thereof; and unto me, I take Christ to be my witness, it would be a great comfort; in whom I wish you, with all your flock, heartily well to fare.

Your prisoner, and humble beadman unto God for you,

THOMAS BILNEY.

The State of the Church of Christ at the commencement of the Reformation, as described by John Fox in his Acts and Monuments.

ALTHOUGH it cannot be sufficiently expressed with tongue or pen of man, into what miserable ruin and desolation the church of Christ was brought in these latter days; yet partly by the reading of these stories aforepast, some intelligence may be given to them which have judgment to mark, or eyes to see, in what blindness and darkness the world was drowned during the space of four hundred years heretofore and more. By the viewing and considering of which times and histories, thou mayest understand, gentle reader, how the religion of Christ, which only consisteth in spirit and verity, was wholly turned into outward observations, ceremonies, and idolatry. So many saints we had, so many gods, so many monasteries, so many pilgrimages. As many churches, as many reliques, forged and feigned we had. Again, so many reliques, so many lying miracles we believed. Instead of the only living Lord, we worshipped dead stocks and stones. In place of Christ immortal, we adored mortal bread. Instead of his blood, we worshipped the blood of ducks; how the people were led, so that the priests were fed, no care was taken. Instead of God's word, man's word was set up. Instead of Christ's testament, the pope's testament, that is, the canon law. Instead of Paul, the master of sentences* took place, and almost full possession. The law of God was little read; the use and end thereof was less known. And as the end of the law was unknown, so the difference between the gospel and the law was not understood, the benefit of Christ not considered, the effect of faith not expended. Through the ignorance whereof, it cannot be told what infinite errors, sects, and religions crept into the church, overwhelming the

* Thomas Aquinas, see Wickliff, p. 183.

world, as with a flood of ignorance and seduction. And no marvel, for where the foundation is not well laid, what building can stand and prosper? The foundation of all our christianity is ONLY this,—the promise of God in the blood of Christ his Son, giving and promising life unto all that believe in him. GIVING, saith the scripture, unto us, and not bargaining or indenting with us? And that FREELY, saith the scripture, for Christ's sake, and not conditionally, for our merits' sake.

Furthermore, Freely, saith the scripture, by grace, that the promise might be firm and sure, and not by the works that we do, which always are doubtful. By grace, saith the scripture, through promise to all and upon all that believe, and not by the law upon them that do deserve. For if it come by deserving, then is it not of grace. If it be not of grace, then is it not of promise. And, contrariwise, if it be of grace and promise, then it is not of works, saith St. Paul. Upon this foundation of God's free promise and grace, first builded the patriarchs, kings, and prophets. Upon the same foundation also Christ the Lord builded his church. Upon the which foundation the apostles likewise builded the church apostolical or catholical.

This apostolical and catholic foundation, so long as the church did retain, so long it continued sincere and sound; which endured a long season after the apostles' time. But after, in process of years, through wealth and negligence crept into the church, so soon as this foundation began to be lost, came in new builders, who would build, upon a new foundation, a new church more glorious, which we call now the church of Rome. Who, being not contented with the old foundation and the head corner stone, which the Lord by his word had laid; in place thereof, they laid the groundwork upon the condition and strength of the law and works. Although it is not to be denied, but that the doctrine of God's holy law, and of good works according to the same, is a thing most necessary to be learned and followed of all men; yet it is not that foundation, whereupon our salvation consisteth, neither is that foundation able to bear up the weight of the kingdom of heaven; but it is rather the thing, which is builded upon the foundation; which foundation is Jesus Christ, according as we are taught of St. Paul, saying, No man can lay any other foundation, beside that which is laid, Christ Jesus, &c.

But this ancient foundation, with the old ancient church

of Christ, as I said, hath been now of long time forsaken, and instead thereof, a new church with a new foundation hath been erected and framed; not upon God's promise and his free grace in Christ Jesus, nor upon free justification by faith, but upon merits and deserts of men's working. And hereof have they planted all these their new devices, so infinite that they cannot well be numbered, as masses-trecenaries, dirges, obsequies, matins, and hours singing service, vigilis, midnight-rising, barefoot-going, fish-tasting, lent-fast, ember-fast, stations, rogations, jubilees, advocation of saints, praying to images, pilgrimage walking, works of supererogation, application of merits, orders, rules, sects of religion, vows of chastity, wilful poverty, pardons, relations, indulgences, penance, and satisfaction, with auricular confession, founding of abbeys, building of chapels, giving to churches. Who is able to recite all their laborious buildings, falsely framed upon a wrong ground, and all for ignorance of the true foundation, which is the free justification by faith in Christ Jesus the Son of God?

Moreover to note, that as this new found church of Rome was thus deformed in doctrine, so no less was it corrupted in order of life and deep hypocrisy; doing all things only under pretences and dissembled titles. So, under the pretence of Peter's chair, they exercised a majesty above emperors and kings; under the visor of their vowed chastity, reigned adultery; under the cloak of professed poverty, they possessed the goods of the temporality; under the title of being dead unto the world, they not only reigned in the world, but also ruled the world; under the colour of the keys of heaven to hang under their girdle, they brought all the states of the world under their girdle, and crept not only into the purses of men, but also into their consciences. They heard their confessions, they knew their secrets, they dispensed as they were disposed, and loosed what them listed. And finally, when they had brought the whole world under their subjection, yet did their pride neither cease to ascend, neither could their avarice be ever satisfied.

In these so blind and miserable corrupt days of darkness and ignorance, thou seest, good reader, I doubt not, how necessary it was, and high time, that reformation of the church should come, which now most happily and graciously began to work, through the merciful and no less needful providence of almighty God. Who although he suffered his church to wander and start aside through the seduction

of pride and prosperity for a long time, yet at length it pleased his goodness to respect his people, and to reduce his church into the pristine foundation and frame again, from whence it was piteously decayed.

And herein we have first to behold the admirable work of God's wisdom. For as the first decay and ruin of the church, before began of rude ignorance, and lack of knowledge in teachers; so to restore the church again by doctrine and learning, it pleased God to open to man THE ART OF PRINTING, the time whereof was shortly after the burning of Huss and Jerome, A. D. 1416. Printing being opened, instantly ministered unto the church the instruments and tools of learning and knowledge, which were good books and authors, which before lay hid and unknown. The science of printing being found, immediately followed the grace of God; which stirred up good wits aptly to conceive the light of knowledge and of judgment; by which light, darkness began to be espied, and ignorance to be detected, truth from error, religion to be discerned from superstition.

Furthermore, after these men stirred up of God, followed others more, increasing daily more and more in science, in tongues, and perfection of knowledge; who now were able, not only to discern in matters of judgment, but also were so armed and furnished with the help of good letters, that they encountered also with the adversary, sustaining the cause and defence of learning against barbarity—of verity against error—of true religion against superstition. And here began the first push and assault to be given against the ignorant and barbarous faction of the pope's pretended church. Who after that, by their learned writings and laborious travail, they had opened a window of light unto the world, and had made, as it were, a way more ready for other to come after, immediately, according to God's gracious appointment, followed MARTIN LUTHER, with others after him, by whose ministry it pleased the Lord to work a more full reformation of his church.

The Benefit and Invention of Printing described by John Fox.

WE find the year of our Lord 1450 to be famous and memorable, for the divine and miraculous inventing of printing. What man soever was the instrument, without

all doubt God himself was the ordainer and disposer thereof, as he was of the gift of tongues. And well may this gift of printing be resembled to the gift of tongues: for as God then spake with many tongues, and yet all that would not turn the Jews; so now, when the Holy Ghost speaketh to the adversaries in innumerable sorts of books, yet they will not be converted, nor turn to the gospel.

Now to consider to what end and purpose the Lord hath given this gift of printing to the earth, and to what great utility and necessity it serves, it is not hard to judge, whoso wisely considers both the time of the sending, and the sequel which thereof ensueth.

And first, touching the time of this faculty given to the use of man, this is to be marked, that when the bishop of Rome with all the whole and full consent of the cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, lawyers, doctors, provosts, deans, archdeacons, assembled together in the council of Constance, had condemned poor John Huss and Jerome of Prague to death for heresy, notwithstanding they were no heretics, and after they had subdued the Bohemians and all the world under the supreme authority of the Romish see; and had made all christian people obedienciaries and vassals unto the same, having, as one would say, all the world at their will, so that the matter now was past not only the power of all men, but the hope also of any man to be recovered—in this very time so dangerous and desperate, where man's power could do no more, there the blessed wisdom and omnipotent power of the Lord began to work for his church; not with sword and target to subdue his exalted adversary, but with printing, writing, and reading, to convince darkness by light, error by truth, ignorance by learning. So that, by this means of printing, the secret operation of God hath heaped upon that proud kingdom a double confusion. God of his secret judgment, seeing it was time to help his church, found a way by this faculty of printing, not only to confound his life and conversation, which before he could not abide to be touched, but also to cast down the foundation of his standing, that is, to examine, confute, and detect his doctrine, laws, and institutions most detestable in such sort, that though his life were ever so pure, yet his doctrine standing as it doth, no man is so blind but he may see, that either the pope is antichrist, or else that antichrist is near cousin to the pope; and all this doth and will hereafter more and more appear by printing.

The reason whereof is, that hereby tongues are known, knowledge groweth, judgment increaseth, books are dispersed, the scripture is seen, the doctors are read, stories are opened, times compared, truth discerned, falsehood detected, and with finger pointed, and all, as I said, through the benefit of printing. Wherefore, I suppose, that either the pope must abolish printing, or he must seek a new world to reign over; for else, as this world standeth, PRINTING DOUBTLESS WILL ABOLISH HIM. But the pope, and all his college of cardinals, must understand, that through the light of printing the world beginneth now to have eyes to see, and heads to judge. He cannot walk so invisible in a net, but he will be spied. And although through might he stopped the mouth of John Huss before, and of Jerome, that they might not preach, thinking to make his kingdom sure; yet, instead of J. Huss and others, God hath opened the press to preach, whose voice the pope is never able to stop with all the puissance of his triple crown. By this printing, as by the gift of tongues, and as by the singular organ of the Holy Ghost, the doctrine of the gospel soundeth to all nations and countries under heaven, and what God revealeth to one man, is dispersed to many, and what is known in one nation, is opened to all.

The first and best were for the bishop of Rome, by the benefit of printing, to learn and know the truth. If he will not, let him well understand that printing is not set up for nought. To strive against the stream it availeth not. What the pope hath lost, since printing and the press began to preach, let him reckon. First, when Erasmus wrote, and Frobenius printed, what a blow thereby was given to all friars and monks in the world! And who seeth not that the pen of Luther following after Erasmus, and set forward by writing, hath set the triple crown so awry on the pope's head, that it is never likely to be set straight again?

Briefly, if there were no demonstration to lead, yet by this one argument of printing, the bishop of Rome might understand the counsel and purpose of the Lord to work against him, having provided such a way in earth, that almost how many printing presses there are in the world, so many block-houses there are against the high castle of St. Angelo; so that either the pope must abolish knowledge and printing, or printing at length will root him out. For of a man wisely consider the hold and standing of the pope,

thus he may repute with himself, that as nothing made pope strong in time past, but lack of knowledge and i rance of simple christians; so contrariwise, now notl doth debilitate and shake the high spire of his papacy much as reading, preaching, knowledge, and judgmen that is to say, the fruit of printing. Whereof some ex rience we see already, and more is like, by the Lo blessing, to follow. For although, through outward fo and violent cruelty, tongues dare not speak, yet the hearts men daily, no doubt, are instructed through the benefit printing. And though the pope doth now hold by cruel and in times past by ignorance, had all under his possessio yet neither must he think that violence will always cont nue, neither must he hope for that now, which he ha then; forsomuch as in former days books were scarce, an of such excessive price, that few could attain to the buyin fewer to the reading and studying, which books now, b means of this art, are made easy unto all men.

Moreover, for defect of books and good authors, uni versities were decayed, and good understandings kep in ignorance, while begging friars, scraping all the wealth from other priests, heaped up all books that could be gotten into their own libraries; where either they did not diligently apply them, or else did not rightly use them, or at least kept them from such as more fruitfully would have perused them. In this then so great rarity, and also dearth of good books, when neither they which could have books would well use them, nor they that would could have them to use, what marvel if the greediness of a few prelates abused the blindness of those days, to the advancement of themselves? Wherefore, almighty God of his merciful providence, seeing both what lacked in the church, and how also to remedy the same, for the advancement of his glory, gave the understanding of this excellent art or science of printing, whereby three singular commodities at one time came to the world. First, the price of all books is diminished. Secondly, the speedy help of reading more furthered. And thirdly, the plenty of all good authors enlarged. By reason whereof, as printing of books ministered matter of reading; so reading brought learning, learning showed light, by the brightness whereof blind ignorance was suppressed, error detected, and finally, God's glory, with the truth of his word, advanced.

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